

LILIAN:

A RACY INDIAN NOVEL.



BY
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L I L I A N

PREFACE.



LILIAN, although written by the author as a sequel to "HOW WILL IT END," has little in connection with the last story, and can therefore be read with interest even by those who have not read its predecessor. The only tie in connection is that Lilian Huntingdon is the granddaughter of Mrs. Richardson, whose daughter, Mary, married Meryn Huntingdon, the father of Lilian.

Mrs. Richardson's second daughter, Daisy, who was but a child when she was introduced in the last novel, is now a woman and plays her part as such in the present volume.

Mr. Keller, the rejected suitor for the hand of Mary Richardson, before her marriage with Mr. Huntingdon, is mentioned as having married Mr. Reisseger's daughter and returned on a visit to India.

The two Reissegers (brothers)—the younger who died before the end of the last tale, and the elder who retired to Germany with his wife and family—would scarcely interest the readers of "Lilian."

A pig is an animal which most persons consider a dull stupid creature, but the pig, when trained, is known to be as sagacious as a dog, to following his master everywhere, accompanying him in all his sports, and taking almost the same interest in them as the dog. The only objection is, that the pig by nature is a greedy animal, and no training, however careful, would entirely check its voracious appetite, which is its greatest failing.

LILIAN

CHAPTER I.

LILIAN HUNTINGDON.



EIGHTEEN YEARS have elapsed since we left Mrs. Richardson at Reisseger's grave; for it was not long after, that her dearest wish had been fulfilled: "I can't! but once, let me die here." In introducing Lilian to our readers, we shall endeavour to sustain the interest, which we hope was awakened by the little volume of "*How WILL IT END,*" and which we trust has not yet quite subsided; and our most earnest desire is, that the characters in this book may not come to so sadly unfortunate an end as the ill-fated Reisseger and the boy-lover Keller; nor shall we choose for the bright and light-hearted Lilian the naughty little station of——where idleness gave to the younger minds scope for so romantic a development.

At the time when our story commences, Lilian is a girl of about eighteen years of age; in figure she is tall and slender, and her eyes, which are of a steel grey, together with her hair, which is almost black, lend the charm of pleasing contrast to her dazzlingly white and transparent skin. She is a fine horsewoman, equalling the best professionals in her equestrian performances, but withal womanly. Her graceful accomplishments in this line are so well known that she is often spoken of as the Indian jockey, foremost in the hunting field, and never absent from the paperchases, enthusiastically following the hounds and frequently coming off victress. In the mirthful exuberance of that bewitching period she indulged with equal

zest in all the various pastimes to which sunny maidenhood lends its captivating graces.

This morning we find her gauntleted, whip in hand and attended by the loveliest brace of hounds one would wish to see ; and standing near her, is a splendid Arab with arched neck and glossy coat, black as jet. The horse affectionately rubs his nose on his mistress's shoulder, while Mr. Huntingdon, with the pardonable pride of a father, surveys his daughter from the upper balcony. Lilian is his only child, and, fond as he had been of her who had been the source of so much love and happiness to him during the few years of their wedded life, he clung with even greater yearning and tenacity to her offspring. Lilian scarcely remembered her mother ; she was but a child when that dear parent died ; she had looked to her father for everything ; he had been both father and mother to her ; he had lulled her to sleep, and caressed and coaxed her when she was a naughty peevish child. Of course Daisy used to come at times, but Daisy was mostly with the Mowbrays, and Lilian was some years younger than Daisy, so that there could scarcely be companionship between them ; yet Lilian loved her gentle aunt and she was very pleased to have her over.

Daisy Richardson was only a little girl when we last saw her. She is now between twenty-six and twenty-eight, yet no one would take her to be more than two-and-twenty ; she looked so fragile and simple with her quiet little face and her large luminous brown eyes and nut brown hair.

What was it which prevented Daisy from entering that state which has its charms for all women—marriage—the end, or more truly the beginning, of all their troubles ? Did her mother's sad experience act as a deterrent ? Or was it that she cared for some one who did not return her passion ? Whatever was the cause, we find her unmarried at the opening of our tale.

The Mowbrays and Daisy were expected shortly at the Grange. Dr. Mowbray had been transferred to the hills, and was coming down on short leave. It was a time of anxious expectation for Lilian ; she remembered hearing her

father say how kindly Dr. and Mrs. Mowbray had treated her mother and grandmother. She never tired of going to the stables and consulting their jockey Norman as to the best horses to be reserved for the use of the Mowbrays. She also visited the kennels every morning, and satisfied herself that the cots were kept clean ; and she personally superintended the bathing and brushing of her hounds, bull dogs and fox-terriers. In addition to these, Lilian has another favourite which deserves more particular mention, and that is a snow-white pig with a strawberry mark behind her left ear. She brought it out with her from England, much to the disgust of some, and to the laughter of others among the passengers on board. Lilian fed and played with the pig whenever she could spare the time, and Piggy was devotedly attached to her mistress, and served her as faithfully as any dog. She followed her when out riding, and joined the dogs in all their sports, much to the displeasure of those animals, who detested Piggy and grew jealous of their mistress's attention to so dirty and ugly a brute as they doubtless considered her to be. Besides, Piggy could play cards which none of them could do, and Piggy was as sagacious as Ouida's Puck, only that Puck used to tell tales out of school, whereas Piggy kept her secrets to herself. Often when Lilian sat out in the garden under the India-rubber tree, or the cocoanut palms, Piggy sat at her mistress's feet, and rested her head on Lilian's white frock.

CHAPTER II.

THE GRANGE.

READER! forget for awhile the sights and sounds of the Great City, its highways of commerce and crowded thoroughfares, the native bamboo hackeries laden with merchandise, and drawn by the lineal descendants of Pharaoh's lean kine, its hackney carriages with their famine-stricken tats, noisy drivers and chattering inmates, and its dirty-looking tram cars with their motley fares. Transport yourself to the cool pleasant suburb of Ballygunge. Look! yonder to the right stretches an extent of green sward known as the Maidan, and used for recreative purposes by Ballygungeites. It is here that the cruel sport of pigeon-shooting is indulged in. Lovers affect this spot in preference to all others for moonlight strolls. That large Peepul tree, with the raised brick seat round its trunk, affords a convenient resting-place for the exchange of vows. Early pedestrians and equestrians vie with each other in inhaling the first sweet breath of morn on this health-giving Maidan. Beyond this plain are the cricket ground, and the quarters for the Viceroy's Bodyguard. Still further on, and lost in the distance, are brick kilns, paddy fields and miniature jungles. To the left, and opposite the Maidan, stands the Grange with the main road running past it. Its iron portal, slashed in bronze with the monogram of the Huntingdons, is surmounted by a dragon; while the abutments support two greyhounds *couchant* of golden bronze. Through the gateway, and on both sides of a green, velvety lawn, sweeps the broad carriage-drive up to the house, a commodious but unpretentious mansion. To the left of the gate is a large tank, the water of which

is partly covered with the leaves of the beautiful *Victoria Regia*, the lilies of which, when open, are of the prettiest pink and white. On the same side as the tank is a *chubbootra* on which the Huntingdons take their afternoon tea, and on which they sit of an evening after dinner. Behind the house are two more tanks which, at a certain season of the year, make the Grange unhealthy. Alongside of these are the servants' houses, the kennels, the stables, and the horse-boxes; and, further on, the pigsty. There is also a considerable extent of gentle undulating waste land. To the right, is a knoll crowned with betel and cocoanut palms, while to the left lies a tope of trees. In this orchard are to be found the well-known Indian fruit trees. Here is Macaulay's luscious lichee, the delicate-flavoured Bombay mango, the tantalising date, the Calcutta plantain, and the offensive thorny sticky jack (the largest fruit in India and allied to the dorian, a native of Burmah).

Lilian loved the Grange; it was the place of her birth, and it was given to her by her grandmother, old Mrs. Huntingdon. Lilian remembered it in her childhood's days, before she was sent for her education to Europe, whence she had now returned after many years' absence; still the old associations, not the least bright of which were connected with the lifetime of her dear mother, clung to her. The property was bought by Mrs. Huntingdon when she was in India with her husband, who was a Colonel in the Bengal Lancers, and afterwards on the staff. The Huntingdons purchased a lot of landed property in India, but this was the only house they had in Calcutta. Colonel Huntingdon went to the hills every summer in charge of his office. He had done many years' service in the army, and retired shortly before his death, upon coming in for an estate in Westmoreland, which was afterwards inherited by his son. He left behind him a widow and two children (a son and a daughter). Mervyn Huntingdon, although some years senior to his sister, married long after she did. The sister was always in delicate health. Her husband, Mr. Granville, died suddenly

(a few years after his marriage) of typhoid fever in the vile district of Moorshedabad, where he held an appointment as Sub-Divisional Officer. It was a severe shock to her already weakened frame. Mrs. Granville took her little girl Karminie to England, and shortly after her arrival she too passed away, leaving little Karminie to the tender care of her grandmother.

Lilian and Karminie were much attached to each other. Lilian was the younger, by a couple of years. She had often written to Karminie asking her to come to India, and it was after a deal of persuasion that Mrs. Huntingdon consented to allow her granddaughter to accept of Lilian's invitation, promising that she would pay the visit in the following winter.

CHAPTER III.

DR. & MRS. MOWBRAY VISIT THE GRANGE.

THE train, after its long and wearisome journey, dusty and travel-stained, with its engine puffing and blowing, steamed into the station, and was soon relieved of its tired passengers. The ticket-collectors opened the doors, and the coolies dashed out the luggage perfectly regardless of breakage.

Mr. Huntingdon was at the station with his daughter to receive the Mowbrays and Daisy. After the usual greetings were exchanged, they entered the carriage awaiting them and drove to the Grange, while the servants with the packages followed in a ticca.

On their arrival at the house, Mr. Huntingdon conducted Mrs. Mowbray up the carpeted stairs. She paused to look at the splendid interior. The spacious room with its beautifully distempered walls the venetian-stained glass doors with rose-tinted silk curtains, rich velvet-pile carpets, ebony furniture tipped with gilt lines, sofas with cushions of red satin, the brilliant gaseliers and lovely mirrors, gave to the room a dazzling appearance. Here was a Schiedmayer's piano and other massive pieces of furniture too numerous to describe.

The room adjoining this was called the Green Room, which was in daily use, and took its name from the light green walls ornamented with painted wreaths of ivy. The couches and chairs covered with green cretonne, the Kidderminster carpets, and the pretty art muslin curtains made the room look fresh and cool.

There was a smaller room, leading from this, which was Lilian's boudoir, a demi-bow room, with China mats and Bombay furniture and Chinese screens and ornaments.

Mr. Huntingdon then led Mrs. Mowbray to the third floor, where rooms had been reserved for their use. All the rooms on that floor consisted of bed-rooms.

After the ladies had removed their wraps *chota hazree* was announced. This repast was always taken in the summer-house among ferns and orchids.

Later on during the day Lilian took Daisy to make a few calls, and in the afternoon drove her to Alipore in her pony trap, where on the road they met two gentlemen walking who accosted them. Lilian recognised her cousin Major Newcombe as one of the gentlemen who introduced his companion Captain D'Oyley, of the Staff Corps, who was staying for a time in Calcutta at the Officers' Mess, where Major Newcombe also remained. Both gentlemen gladly availed themselves of the invitation to join the ladies in their drive and got into the cart. They were both blondes—very much alike at a first glance. They made themselves so agreeable that when they proposed returning to the Mess, Lilian asked them to dinner, and on their consenting, she drove to their quarters and waited outside, while Captain D'Oyley gave orders to his bearer to go on to the Grange with their evening suits. Major Newcombe (or Cliff as his cousin called him) in the meantime amused the young ladies with his sparkling wit. He was one of those light-hearted men who never take life in a serious way. He always laughed and joked till his friends were wont to say that he came from a giggle's nest.

The Captain, on the contrary, was very quiet. He had a few dry jokes which he at times indulged in, and was a capital mimic. He was an easy-going sort of fellow, and generally succeeded in ingratiating himself with his friends.

Mr. Huntingdon took such a liking to Captain D'Oyley that he invited him to come over whenever he chose, and of this invitation the Captain was not backward in availing himself, for he became a daily visitor, and was looked upon by the inmates of the Grange as one of themselves. Mrs.

Mowbray spoke constantly to him of her son, whom our readers will remember as the delicate boy (Mrs. Mowbray's son by her first marriage) who was sent away to England, and who had since passed for the army.

Lilian had never seen him, for, on his arrival in India, he was sent to the Frontier, and this would be his first visit to Calcutta, on his transfer to Rowdypore, where his regiment was to be quartered. He was expected during the week, and this was why Mrs. Mowbray came down from Naini Tal. She had not seen him for years, and her nervous anxiety to have him with her again was painful.

At last the day arrived for him to come, and the mother was nearly frantic with joy, for he had surpassed her brightest expectations of him, and even Lilian started in surprise as he entered the room. He had left his traps at the Fort, had changed his travel-stained dress, and re-attired in a well-fitting black coat and trousers he drove to the Grange, and arrived there just as the ladies were assembled in the green room before their five o'clock tea.

Edward Sommerville entered the room with the easy grace which was habitual to him. He warmly embraced his mother, greeted Daisy, and bowed to Lilian, for no one thought of introducing him. Who would have taken him to be the same delicate boy who was led by his mother into the room on the day when Keller called about the diamonds. Here he stood, the full symmetry of his figure showing to advantage in his well-fitting suit; his soft steel grey eyes looking larger and still more expressive than before; his dark auburn hair in clustering ringlets cut quite close to his head, and his well-trimmed mustaches had a slight droop—in fact he was all that a woman could desire. His voice was low and silvery, and his manner was genial and taking. He won the hearts of those around him, and he became at once quite a favourite with the ladies. Dr. Mowbray and Mr. Huntingdon were indeed glad to see him, and welcomed him with warmth, and after tea Lilian took him over the grounds to look at her pets. Lieutenant Sommerville

evinced an interest in every one of them—even in the pig who returned his caresses, and went through all manner of antics in her great joy.

Lilian asked him to accompany her in her rides, which he did every morning during his stay in Calcutta. So the time passed by, and the young people gradually drifted down the stream of love—little dreaming of the danger in each other's society. To Lilian it was a new sensation, an awakening from the lethargy of life, and Edward Sommerville, young and passionate, soon entangled himself in the silken meshes which were so innocently spread for him, while the parent birds noted with loving concern the interesting game, and lent their aid to the little scheme.

Mrs. Mowbray felt that her handsome boy could not make a better choice than the beautiful girl by his side just budding into womanhood, and Mr. Huntingdon, sorry as he would be to part with his child, would not say one word which he thought would mar her happiness.

It was on a bright summer's day that Edward Sommerville put to Lilian the question which for days had disturbed his mind. They were walking in the garden as it was their wont to do after five o'clock tea, when he plucked a rose bud, and giving it to Lilian said: "If you love me, wear this for my sake."

It was so simple a request that Lilian consented. He then kissed her, and drawing her hand through his arm led her to his mother.

"Mother," he said, "we have been in the garden. I have plucked a rose bud and have gained a lily, pure and white as its virgin emblem, the sweetest girl I have ever known, and she has consented to be my wife."

"Monmouth," Mrs. Mowbray answered, "this is indeed a pleasant surprise; no woman could be more blessed than I am to have two of the loveliest children upon earth to be her own."

She affectionately embraced the young lovers, and took them to Mr. Huntingdon to win his consent to his daughter's union. This was readily given. There was not the slightest

vestige of pain depicted upon the features of the father so well did he conceal, beneath the mask of disguise, the pang he felt at parting with his only child, for he knew that when married she would have to go with her husband into danger. He kissed Lilian and congratulated Sommerville.

Later on Daisy and Dr. Mowbray were informed of the engagement, and there was one more whom Lilian would have to tell—Clifford. How would Major Newcombe bear it? "Dear old Cliff," Lilian thought to herself, "I wonder whether he will be glad or unhappy. I should not for the world like to pain him."

People wondered why the Major was not married. He was liked wherever he went, and was a universal favourite with the ladies, yet he continued to avoid all matrimonial snares; he preferred the society of his books and horses and of his brother-officers to the sweet companionship of a bride. Clifford Newcombe might have told the truth had he cared to do so. From his boyhood he had passionately loved a fair young girl. When he was a boy of twelve, and she a babe in arms, he used to bring her sweets and toys and often deprived himself of a holiday with his school fellows by sitting for hours and amusing her. He could picture Lilian as the little toddling babe who would look to him for support; he could not associate her with marriage, surely that was a thing of the future. He would even now nestle her head close to him and kiss the upturned face that was always ready to give him welcome. But such news as the engagement of a beautiful girl and an heiress could not be kept a secret; the servants spread it far and wide that their *miss sahib* was to marry the *chota pultan ka sahib*. And in honour of the betrothed couple Mr. Huntingdon decided upon giving a dinner party on the eve of Lieutenant Sommerville's departure to join his regiment. About forty persons were asked to the dinner—intimate friends of the Mowbrays and the Huntingdons; the only invitation Edward Sommerville asked for was one for an old friend of his, a Cavalry Officer on the staff, and with whom he was a special favourite.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DINNER PARTY.

MRS. MOWBRAY, attired in a magnificent moiré antique of gobelin blue, sat in the splendidly furnished drawing-room where she did the honors of hostess (awaiting the guests), while Mr. Huntingdon stood at the top of the stairs to receive them.

The room looked quite gay with the ladies' dresses of various colours and the gentlemen's bright uniforms. Edward Sommerville looked to the best advantage in his full dress of the Bengal Infantry. No woman could find it in herself to feel discontented with such a man for a husband, and well might Mrs. Mowbray be proud of her son. With young Sommerville came Lieutenant-Colonel Ranford, a man of about five feet seven, slight in figure, and of aristocratic mien; his hair almost black, and his mustaches slightly grizzled were waxed at the ends; his eyes of bluish grey seemed to penetrate when he looked at you; his Cavalry uniform of the 107th Bengal, which was slashed with gold, gave him a dashing appearance, and round his neck he wore a thin black cord, to which was suspended a pair of gold-rimmed eye glasses, and these he made frequent use of. He was generous in thought and deed, and was loved by those who served under him. Looking at him you would guess his age to be about forty-two. Major Newcombe and Captain D'Oyley, old friends of his, were conversing with him when Lillian entered the room. He did not notice her entrance until Lieutenant Sommerville said: "Ranford, let me introduce you to Miss Huntingdon." It was then for the first time that their eyes met. He smiled and offered her his hand, saying "she could not have chosen better than she had done, and that he hoped to see her often after her marriage, as he was staying in Rowdypore."

Lilian looked very bewitching in her simple toilette of cr  me satin ; she wore a bouquet of water lilies on her bodice and diamond stars in her dark hair, and her mother's diamond necklace, which once belonged to Mrs. Mowbray, was round her neck. The guests having arrived, Mrs. Mowbray gave the signal by rising from her seat and selecting the parties. She asked the Colonel to take Lilian down, which he gallantly did.

Lilian found herself blushing more frequently than she cared, in this man's presence. She felt strangely fascinated by his manner ; there was something peculiar which attracted her to him. He made himself very agreeable, and did all he could, exerting every nerve to please and keep her entertained, so that when dinner came to a close Lilian was sorry ; it was only the promise, conveyed in a whisper, that he should soon join her in the drawing-room, which restored the bright happy look to Lilian's face. When the guests again gathered together, Dr. Mowbray proposed a Cinderella dance, which, if not given up when the clock struck twelve, the fairy godmother's magical wand would turn their carriages into pumpkins and their horses into mice. For the purpose of this dance they entered the green-room, which looked brilliant with the profusion of lights, and gay with ferns and orchids. Colonel Ranford, true to his word, left the smoking room early and joined the ladies, claiming Lilian for the dance, who thoroughly enjoyed the Cotillon, while Lieutenant Sommerville led Daisy up for it, and Major Newcombe led up Mrs. Mowbray.

Mr. Huntingdon had never before seen his daughter in such exuberant spirits. After the dance was over, at the request of his mother, Edward Sommerville sang an old German song :

“Dein Ist Mein Herz
Dein Ist Mein Herz.”

At its conclusion Mrs. Waller, the wife of a veteran, turned to Mrs. Mowbray and remarked :

“I have never before heard that song sung with so much feeling as to night by your son's clear baritone voice.”

"Thank you, Mrs. Waller, for the praise you give my son," replied the fond mother. "He has come up to my highest expectations. The Doctor was very anxious that he should follow his profession, but Edward had no taste for it, and preferred being a soldier."

"And right he was in his preference," chimed in Colonel Waller, who came up in time to hear the conversation between the two ladies. "Nothing is nicer than a promising young officer who, we all hope, will soon win his colours. My wife has turned me into a Babu, and Ranford, too, has recently taken to Babudom."

"Colonel Ranford must have been a fine-looking man in his youth," remarked Daisy.

"Yes, yes, Ranford is a brick of a fellow," answered the Colonel, rubbing his nose with his pocket handkerchief to keep off a sneezing fit. "Mrs. Waller and I have known him for years and his—ahem !!!—" the Colonel was unable to conclude his sentence, for the provoking fit of sneezing came on and he rushed into the verandah, leaving the sentence unfinished.

"It is getting on to the small hours of morning," observed Mrs. Waller as she rose to take her departure, and wishing Mrs. Mowbray and the girls goodby she sent for her husband to see her into the carriage. The other guests also rose to go.

CHAPTER V.

LILIAN AND THE MAJOR.

ON the following day, prior to joining his regiment, Edward Sommerville called at the Grange to say he was leaving for Rowlypore ; and some days later, Dr. and Mrs. Mowbray took their departure for the hills, leaving Daisy behind with Lilian.

Everything seemed to get on in much the same way as before the Mowbrays visited the Grange. Captain D'Oyley came as usual, but Clifford Newcombe's visits decreased. He devoted most of his time to the study of Hindustani, in which language he had to pass his examination in order to get on the staff. Lilian fancied that at times she noticed a shade of thought on his usually bright countenance, and wondered at its cause. It was on one of these occasions when cruel fate had left them to each other's society, that Lilian put her arms round his neck and asked if he had anything that troubled his mind.

"Oh! Lily do not tempt me," he imploringly replied releasing himself from her. "Do not embrace me, Lilian. Surely you must know how unhappy I am. You would not wish me to pain you by confessing the unwelcome truth. Why rouse feelings which are best buried? Why extort a confession that can only disturb the rebellious heart and rebind the shackles which I am striving to shake off?"

Lilian understood him ; the truth flashed upon her. Quick of perception and generous of feeling, it grieved her to think that she should have caused him pain. She threw herself into his arms, and said : "Oh! Cliff, I cannot bear to make you unhappy. I never dreamed that you cared for me so. What am I to do? Shall I refuse him?"

"Refuse Sommerville," he replied. "No, how could you?"

You are in honor bound to him ; besides what would your father say ; and do you not love him ? ”

“ Yes, yes, I think I do,” she answered.

“ Think you do, Lilian ! What is the meaning of this ? I am sure you were free to choose for yourself. You must keep your word with him or tell him the truth and leave it to him to release you.”

Clifford Newcombe was the soul of honor, and Lilian’s words pained him.

In answer to his question she could only say : “ I could not tell him, Cliff, that I do not care for him, and he is my own choice ; I am sure I like him, but I am so sorry for you.”

“ I will go away and try to forget it. Lilian, you must not allow your happiness to be marred through any thought for me. I must reconcile myself to this, and Lily, my little love, you must be careful of yourself. You are still very young and you ought not to be too frequently in the company of Colonel Ranford. He, although a noble fellow, is very impulsive and very susceptible to woman’s charms. Men are not angels, Lilian, and you are engaged, and he—”

The further words were checked as Daisy approached them with an open letter in her hand, reading out that Lancaster intended visiting Calcutta again next cold season, that Keller had married Hildegard Reisseger, and that Cressence intended soon to follow her sister’s example by also marrying.

CHAPTER VI.

THE "VIEW," SIMLA.

SUNDAYS were gala days at the Grange—riding parties in the morning, tennis parties in the afternoon, and guests to dinner.

Mr. Huntingdon was not so straightlaced and puritanical as many of his countrymen. He thought that there was no harm in enjoying one's self in a simple way, even on a Sunday. He seldom neglected going to morning church service, but always had his house full of visitors in the evening. Among the guests were Capt. D'Oyley, Col. Ranford and Lieut. Sommerville. The two latter drove in from Rowdypore and spent the day at the Grange. But as all dissipations prove too much for the weak, so had they their effect upon Lilian. She drooped under them and grew languid with the trying heat. Mr. Huntingdon grew quite alarmed and decided on taking a trip to the hills. Daisy would, of course, accompany them. Lilian chose Simla, so no time was lost in executing their plan. Articles were purchased, boxes packed and made ready for their departure. Daisy and Lilian attired themselves in their travelling dresses and waited for the carriage which was to convey them with Mr. Huntingdon to the railway station to catch the up mail. Day travelling was anything but pleasant; even the *kaskas* tatties failed to play their part as coolers. Stoppages at small roadside stations were particularly trying. The half-hour waits at the important stations for refreshment, the Benares toys and fancy brass-work exhibited at Moghul Sarai, the varieties of fruit for sale at Ghaziabad, and specimens of Indian handicraft in woodwork at Saharanpore were the principal events of the railway journey to Umballa.

Kalka, at the foot of the hills, was the next stage. So marked was the change that Lilian felt as if new life had been infused into her. Looking back at the wearisome journey she had just accomplished, she felt that she must have succumbed had it not been for the novelty of the scenes she had passed through, and which served to keep alive her interest. She was thankful, however, that it was over, and that the remainder of the journey was to be performed in the exhilarating hill climate.

Lilian was delighted with the beautiful scenery, and grew enthusiastic in her praises. Mr. Huntingdon did not wish to curtail her pleasure, so he decided upon going up to Simla by the old instead of by the Thibet road, the distance by which is about forty-one miles from Kalka. They all three rode, and so dispensed with jampons, which are carried by a dirty set of men called jampanies, who speak a lingo of their own, and who dress very much in the style of the Ancient Britons.

Simla lies in the lower Himalayas, and is about seven thousand feet above the level of the sea. It is the seat of the Viceroy, and the head-quarters of the Government of India during the hot season. The principal hill at Simla is called Jacko, a favorite resort for excursionists, although Mus-hobra is more resorted to for picnic parties. Simla had not the new Government House then, as it has now, situated on Observatory Hill, and commanding a view of the surrounding country for many miles. Still it had some fine buildings. In summer the place is very gay, quite a striking contrast to a summer in Calcutta. Ammandale is the only piece of tableland in Simla, and is reserved for sports, races, and other outdoor amusements.

The Huntingdons' own property, called the "View," was so situated that it overlooked the valley lying below.

Lilian was very pleased with Simla; she took long rides and rambles, and went out quite unattended, except by the greyhound which she brought with her from Calcutta, and which was her constant companion. Diana, the greyhound, never failed to accompany her mistress out of doors,

and Lilian thought her sufficient protection. On one of these occasions, about a month after her arrival, she went further than usual, and growing tired she seated herself on a large smooth rock. She was so thirsty that she tried, as the natives do, to shape her hands into the form of a cup and gather the water which came trickling through the rocks, when the figure of a man attracted her attention, and the dog with a joyous bound greeted the intruder.

"You here, Miss Huntingdon, and alone?" he exclaimed. "I never expected so nice a reward for my constitutional when I came out this morning."

Lilian started when she recognized the speaker to be Col. Ranford, for she supposed him to be miles away. She gave him her hand, which he took in both of his. She looked very pretty, for she had quite regained her health and her colour was radiant.

"How you did startle me, Col. Ranford," she exclaimed. "What has brought you here?"

"Need you ask," he replied; then chucking himself said: "I have been very seedy, and have come on a month's leave. This has been the first summer that I have had to take charge of the office in Calcutta instead of coming to Simla. Are you displeased at my coming?"

"No, oh! no. I am very glad to see you, and I am sure Pa' will also welcome you."

"Is it really true that you are glad to see me Lilian? You do not mind an old fogey, like myself, calling you by your Christian name?" he asked. "How happy your words make me."

"But you are not old, Colonel," she answered, rising to go home as the recollection of Clifford Newcombe's words flashed across her mind. "I must now go," she said. "I have been out too long, and the good folks at home will fear I have been run away with."

"No, do not go yet," he begged. "I have just seen you after such a long time. I am sure you will not be so unkind; rest yourself awhile; you must not refuse me, Lilian."

" Oh ! Col. Ranford."

" Not Col. Ranford," he interposed ; " call me Edward ; you need not be afraid of me."

Lilian yielded and sat down again, for how long she scarcely knew. They at length rose, and the Colonel offered to accompany her to the house. He received a warm welcome from Mr. Huntingdon, and was only allowed to take his leave on promising to come over whenever he liked.

So the days rolled on amidst pleasure and gaiety, and Lilian was constantly thrown into Col. Ranford's society. He accompanied her in her rides and rambles, while the unsuspecting father never for one moment thought of the wrong he did by leaving his child, too young and pretty, to the constant companionship of an impulsive and passionate man ; and Daisy, just as unsuspecting as Mr. Huntingdon, offered no advice ; nor was Major Newcombe near, to give a timely warning. The Colonel, although over forty years of age, was still an attractive man. He had that grace and fascination about him which rendered him dangerous for a girl of Lilian's age. She was inexperienced, and at times impetuous. She was not of a demonstrative disposition, but she was capable of strong feeling where love or hatred was concerned.

Colonel Ranford was not an unprincipled man. He felt he ought not to go too often to the Huntingdons ; that he ought to go back if he could not keep away. He knew that he loved Lilian more than he cared to acknowledge even to himself. Still he went to the " View," and still he escorted her out. Daily he resolved to leave the following day, and yet when the next day arrived, he found himself still at Simla, until the fatal day came at last which forced the confession to his lips. He had no alternative left him but to tell the truth, and with a despairing heart he told Lilian everything. They were on their usual rambles, and wandered into an unfrequented by-path ; he forward and she a little way behind ; when suddenly a fierce hyena sprang across the road from a thicket. With a wild scream

Lilian darted forward, and the Colonel ran to the rescue, while the greyhound followed and attacked the animal, which after a desperate struggle freed itself and made away through the bushes, the dog following up a little distance and then returning.

Lilian was greatly terrified, and she clung to the Colonel for protection in her fear, saying : " Edward, I am so frightened ; protect me."

Little thought she of the pain she inflicted upon him. All his fortitude gave way. All his reserve broke down. He pressed her to him, the fiery blood coursing through his veins. He threw himself on her mercy, and poured forth all his passion, and urged her to give ear to his pleading. Love proved to be his master, and he lost all control over himself ; the pent-up feelings of days, now released, gave vent to his desires as he threw his arm passionately around her, and strained her to his heart with the mad wild love of a man who would give all and everything he possessed for the woman he adored—although he knew that there was that insuperable barrier between them, the thought of which nearly drove him frantic, for as earnestly as he wished to put it aside, it was beyond his power to do so.

Lilian loved this man with all the ardour and devotion of her soul ; her life seemed to be bound up in his. She had at times felt an inclination of love towards others, but now she knew it was only fancy which pervaded her being hitherto. She neither shrank from his touch nor put him aside from her. He bent over her, while the end of his long grizzled mustache touched her cheek.

" My darling," he murmured, " could you love me and yet forgive me ? Would you always love me, Lilian, bad and wild and wicked as I have been ? I know I ought not to win you, I ought not to speak to you of love. I ought to fly from your presence and never seek you again. Would you marry me, my Lilian, if possible ? Would you be happy with me ? Can I dare to hope that I may some day have my darling all to myself to be my very own ? Lilian, do you despise me for this declaration ? Do you think me weak ? I

have tried very hard, my Lilian, my pet, to tear myself away from you, but I cannot."

For answer Lilian only clung the closer to him. She could not tear herself away from his embrace, for she loved him : she had no wish to upbraid him ; to cast him from her. She knew he loved her and she was happy with him. All thought of Edward Sommerville for the moment vanished from her mind. Her heart was too fully occupied with the idol of her affections, the man who was standing beside her. This woman, who was young and beautiful, who was heiress to all the wealth of the Huntingdons, who had an income that any one might covet, loved Edward Ranford from the very depths of her soul—he, who was far above her in years, and who was not nearly so rich as herself.

Reader, can you understand so innocent and so spotless a girl, giving the pure stream of love from the crystal fountains of life to a man who had passed his youth and who had grown hardened in the world ? Lilian was but a child in thought ; of the world and the world's ways she knew nothing. She looked upon Col. Ranford as a being superior to herself. If he willed it, she would have been guided by him to do anything he asked of her, with the simple faith of a child.

"Lilian," he continued, "we must part, oh ! my child, my child, how can I give you up ! how shall I live without you, and yet I must go, or I shall surely harm you. I shall spoil your fair fame and your good reputation and betray your father's trust in me. My pet, how can you understand what I mean. My God !" he despairingly cried, "will this tyranny never end ; will this yoke never break ?"

"Edward," Lilian said still clinging to him, "do not leave me ; do not go, it will break my heart. I love you, I cannot give you up. Ask Pa' to give me to you. I am sure he will consent to my marrying you and breaking off my engagement with Edward Sommerville ; we cannot allow a code of honor to govern our affections to such an extent. Monmouth is so good, he will surely release me without reproach when he knows I love you."

Col. Ranford put his head between his hands and groaned in agony of spirit.

"Lilian," he broke forth vehemently. "What is to be done? Shall we risk the world's opinion? Will you fly with me and wait patiently until God in his great mercy rewards us, and until then we shall live only one for the other? It is a hard thing I know, and a bold request to make—a sin to ask you. Oh! Lilian, how truly miserable I feel; what a terrible burden my life is!"

Lilian turned pale and trembled.

"Col. Ranford, I fail to understand you," she gasped, "for I thought you loved me. Alas! how vain has been my trust in you."

"Lilian," he cried with savage ferocity. "Of course you reproach me. You take me for a villain, and I deserve every hard and every cruel word which you may say to me. I have been a coward in concealing the truth from you that I am a married man. Yes, Lilian, I am married, and to one of the greatest fiends God ever created. A woman who has wrecked my life and blighted my ambition. I did not intend to tell you this. I intended to keep away from you when I found I loved you, but I have been weak. I hoped from day to day to hear of my release; that Merciful Providence would set me free, and then my darling you should be my wife; no barrier should have stood between us, but such happiness is not for me, and now that woman is coming back to intensify my misery by her presence. If I had not been the weak fool that I was, I would have blown out my brains when they insisted upon my marrying her, rather than have gone to the altar like a craven, and taken those vows which bound me to the woman who has made my life a curse."

"Oh! why did you not tell me earlier that you are a married man? This is indeed cruel and unkind," she said.

"God may yet be merciful to us, Lilian; we cannot look into the future. Do not hate me, and make my life harder to bear than it already is. You must forgive me, for my love for you has forced this confession from me. You will try

not to forget me, even though you may bid me never to approach you again. You have your years before you, Lilian; mine are nearly spent, and my troubles have nigh broken me down," he replied.

Lilian was touched by his words; she was very unhappy. After all he was only human; he had sinned in loving her, but then she remembered how miserable his life was, and how hard he had striven to part from her. She turned her face to him with all the misery depicted upon it and said:

"Take me home, I have no desire to live."

"My child, do not talk so despondently; do not make the separation severer than we can help; you will never find me untrue to you in heart."

He took her face between his hands and kissed it, and his eyes were moistened with tears.

"Lilian, my brave little girl, you must not give way; you must keep up your strength and spirits for my sake; do you promise to do this for me, my pet?"

"Yes," she answered through her tears. "I promise you to be brave; your little girl will always think of you with kindness."

"My love," he said, again drawing her towards him, "this is our good-by, but when I am better able to bear my burden I will call at the Grange."

He then walked home with her and took his leave of Mr. Huntingdon and Daisy, who both expressed their regret at his deciding on leaving them so soon, and said that they hoped to see him in Calcutta on their return and after their visit to Dr. and Mrs. Mowbray.

When Col. Ranford had left, Daisy gave Lilian the letters that the morning's post had brought for her—one from Capt. D'Oyley mentioning his departure for Central India; the other letter was from Sommerville, and ran as follows:—

THE MESS, *June*, 1888.

"Everything is so slow down here, and I do so long for your return, dear Lilian, although I feel I am a selfish brute for wishing it. I almost hate Ranford for getting away to the

hills when we are all grilling here. By the way I hear Mrs. Ranford is coming back ; her not very devoted spouse (according to rumour) will be anything but pleased at the news.

"Give my love to my mother when you get to Naini Tal.

"Good-by, love.

EDWARD."

Lilian passed the letter to her father without comment.

CHAPTER VII.

KARMINIE GRANVILLE.

NEARLY two months have passed away since the Huntingdons left Simla; they were now comfortably settled at the Grange. They had paid the promised visit to Dr. and Mrs. Mowbray, and Lilian had quite enjoyed her short stay in Naini Tal. She went to the Lieutenant-Governor's ball and to all the amusements which were then in full swing. Mrs. Mowbray was very proud of her future daughter-in-law, and made no secret of it. She did her best to make Lilian happy, and succeeded in doing so.

Lilian, though very depressed after Col. Ranford's confession, showed no outward sign of her feelings. There were depths in her nature which the hand of trial alone could sound, unknown, till then, even to herself. A true woman can bear up with sorrow, it cannot deaden a noble nature, and she was very young. After awhile a change took place in her whole nature, and she turned gayer than she had ever been before, and in trying to hide her sorrow she overstrained her nerves.

Mrs. Mowbray was surprised to see her so very lively, and attributed it to her approaching marriage. She grew to love Lilian, and she was made a special favourite of during her short stay in the station; people thought her exceedingly charming, and she was much missed when she returned to Calcutta.

The change to the hills had given her a brilliant complexion, and when Edward Sommerville saw her again, he scarcely believed her to be the same pale girl of a few months back. He was half mad with joy at seeing her look so lovely, and welcomed her with all the ardour of his nature, and kissed her again and again. Lilian returned his greeting with equal

warmth, for she was really glad to see him after such a long time. None would have guessed, from the gay exterior, of the aching heart beneath. She had tried to think that her acquaintance with Col. Ranford was but a pleasant dream, the sweetness of which had passed away. Lilian longed for Karminie's arrival; she was now on her way to India, and so was Mr. Lancaster. They were coming out together in a B. I. S. N. Co.'s boat, and would reach Calcutta a few days hence. Lilian busied herself in arranging a room for Karminie, next to her own rooms, and put a lot of bric-a-brac about, and pretty rose-tinted curtains to the doors.

Piggy had grown quite big during the time her mistress was away. The servants had neglected her, and had allowed her to stray into dirty ditches. She was covered all over with filth and mud, and had grown miserably thin. Lilian had enough to do to attend to her being bathed, brushed and well fed before she got into good condition, and was once more presentable. She was thoroughly glad to see her mistress back, and she grunted and jumped upon her in wild delight. Yet there was something strange about Piggy which Lilian could not understand. It was evident that poor Piggy had been ill-treated, and Lilian made up her mind that if ever she went out of Calcutta again she would take Piggy with her.

It was a glorious afternoon about the end of October. Mr. Huntingdon was seated in the garden with Daisy and Lilian, when a carriage drove up to the Grange, and an elderly gentleman alighted from it, assisting by the hand a young and pretty little woman.

Lilian seeing who the occupants of the carriage were, rushed up to welcome them, Daisy and Mr. Huntingdon coming up behind. It seems the steamer had arrived a day before she was expected, and Mr. Lancaster brought Karminie over to her uncle's.

After the first greetings were over, Lilian accompanied her cousin to the room she had arranged for her.

Karminie Granville was shorter than Lilian and very slight in figure, with great dark eyes and a wealth of

burnished golden hair—quite a contrast to Lilian's style of beauty. She was a bit tanned from the glare on boardship. She was very merry-hearted, and had a light ringing laugh which she always indulged in.

"Lily, what a lovely complexion you have. I do declare I look quite dark alongside of you," exclaimed Karminie, laying her face against Lilian's pure and delicate skin, and glancing into the mirror opposite.

"You have only to get the tan off your skin, Karminie, and I am sure you will eclipse me. I felt so nervous about it, that I went to the hills only to get back my roses, so that I may not altogether be thrown aside," answered Lilian.

"For shame, darling," and Karminie drew her cousin down on the sofa in the room and kissed her saying:

"You must now tell me all about your engagement with Lieut. Sommerville. Do you love him very much? Are you to be married soon? And is he nice looking? I should not have come out half so soon if it had not been for my great curiosity to see him."

"He is here every Sunday, so you will have the opportunity in a couple of days' time, to judge for yourself. Mrs. Mowbray is very anxious for our marriage, but Pa' will not consent to it yet awhile. He says that he must get accustomed to the idea of my leaving him. So we have decided upon waiting two years."

"How nice it must be to get engaged," sighed Karminie. "I wish I was as lucky as you are Lilian. I had a sweet-heart whom grandma sent away, saying he was a worthless fellow, and that there were lots of nicer and well-to-do fellows in India who would fall in love with pretty girls, and who being so idle would be sure to do so."

"Military men who are not on the staff," said Lilian, "have an idle time of it, but the poor Jack of the Civil Service has all work and no play."

"Except when he closes office at four o'clock, and goes off to tennis," chimed in Karminie. A lady on boardship was saying that she never met an idler set of men in the

Mofussil than the Magistrates and Collectors who hold their *Cutcherry* from twelve to four only, and sometimes in the early morning, having the rest of the day to themselves."

"We will take you, Karminie, to Rowdypore; it is a little Cantonment about six miles from Calcutta, where Edward's regiment is now quartered; you are sure to get engaged there."

"I wonder why Lancaster has come to India again; he was here many years ago. It strikes me that he is tired of bachelordom, and has intentions of taking unto himself a wife. Perhaps he may go in for Daisy if she will have him," remarked Karminie.

"I hope he will," replied Lilian, "for we can then have a wedding in the house and stand a chance of being bridesmaids."

"Girls," said Daisy, entering the room, "are you coming for a drive?"

"Oh! yes, I should like very much to go, if you would not mind me in this dress," spoke Karminie, indicating the one she wore—a soft grey Cashmere.

"I think you are very nicely dressed," remarked Lilian, "but I am afraid there will not be enough room in the landaulette; there are three of us, besides Pa' and Mr. Lancaster; I should suggest driving Karminie in my pony trap, and leave you, Daisy, to the gentlemen."

"They are not going," replied Daisy. "Mr. Lancaster feels too lazy, and your Pa' is going to keep him company."

"We had better make a move then," said Lilian. "I shall tell the ayah to unpack your boxes, Karminie, and to leave out a lighter dress for you, for dinner."

"Is Mr. Lancaster going to remain at the Grange?" enquired Karminie.

"No," answered Daisy, "he intends going into a boarding house to-morrow, although Mr. Huntingdon asked him to stay with us."

"I am not sorry he is going," said Karminie, "for although he is a nice sort of fellow, he is a bit prosaic, and may be telling grandma' tales out of school, in a friendly

spirit of course. I say, Daisy, would you marry him if he asked you?"

"What an absurd question, Karminie; how can I answer it when I saw him only once in England after he left India, and I was then a child?"

"Come, if we are going for a drive, or it will be too late," said Lilian.

This was Karminie's first visit to Calcutta, and she was very pleased with everything she saw, and quite enjoyed her drive.

The next day, after their ride, Karminie went over the grounds at the Grange, and was introduced to Piggy.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION.

SUNDAY came round again. Lilian and Karminie, dressed in their tennis costumes, with tennis hats on and bats in hand, were standing with Lieut. Sommerville on the lawn, and were chatting gaily waiting for the arrival of their guests. There were a number of persons this afternoon at the Grange, some of whom were invited to remain to dinner. Among the familiar faces were missing those of Col. Ranford and Capt. D'Oyley; the former had not called since the Huntingdons' return. He wrote expressing his regret at being kept a prisoner at home through indisposition, which was not wholly untrue, for the Colonel was, not unlike many other old officers, a victim to gout—and as Capt. D'Oyley used to say, it was due to their ancestors having indulged to excess in good old port.

Major Newcombe came as usual. Among a number of other visitors were Mrs. Pry, an old lady, and her daughter Edith, a pretty girl of an Oriental style of beauty, a well-to-do Doctor, and two gentlemen from the Club.

Mrs. Pry was quite a business-like old lady; she noticed each man as he came, and her eyes looked over the grounds in search of Col. Ranford, whom she had often met before at the Grange. She knew that, although the young civilians and young officers had certain attractions for the fair sex, a Colonel on the Staff would be the most desirable suitor for Edith's hand, and on this account she took a great interest in Col. Ranford. She would have been greatly incensed if she had only heard that he was a married man. She had frequently mentioned her fears to Lilian, and enquired if she was sure that the Colonel had no wife in England. For answer Lilian only laughed.

"My dear," said Mrs. Pry, "your Pa' should question him; he comes here, and we all believe him to be unmarried; he may be

gaining the affections of a young girl, and afterwards we may find Mrs. Ranford coming upon us; it is not at all right."

Lieut. Sommerville, who had overheard the conversation, came up, saying: "Ranford is an awfully nice fellow; his only fault is in having too many wives, Mrs. Pry; some say he has one in England, a second in Africa, and a third in India."

"You naughty man," exclaimed Mrs. Pry, "how can you invent such wicked things?"

"Indeed, it is no invention of mine; I only mention what I have heard; why don't you ask him to tell you the truth?" suggested the Lieutenant.

Mrs. Pry only smiled, and turning to a young civilian who was seated near her put to him a budget of questions and so got into conversation, while Edward Sommerville led Lilian away to play another game of tennis.

The guests, after partaking of refreshments, left the Grange; those that were invited to dinner went home to change their dresses and return. The remainder of the evening passed away as social evenings generally do with agreeable company—some devoting themselves to music and singing, and others to games at whist and chess.

Besides these entertainments, once a fortnight there were musical evenings; and now and again private theatricals and other amusements. They even indulged in boating excursions, and the girls would often, on a morning or on a cloudy afternoon, go for a row in Lilian's little white boat in the large tank near the gate. But of all excitements at the present moment the opening of the International Exhibition was the greatest. It fully occupied the minds of all persons, and was the topic of conversation at the Grange; and especially did it occupy Karminic's thoughts, for she was very anxious to see the great show of the Indian Courts with their rich exhibits.

At last the eventful day arrived—the 17th of December. It was a chilly damp day, and the rain poured down in torrents, dripping through the canopy placed over the throne where H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught sat and

opened the exhibition. Near him was the Viceregal party, and round about were the visitors with a *shamiana* stretched over them, which, however, was scarcely any protection from the rain.

The scene was one of great splendour—there was an abundance of flags and streamers, and numerous festoons of flowers; the bands played, and the guard-of-honour, composed of the Calcutta and Behar Volunteers, helped to make the spectacle an imposing one.

Among the visitors present was a party from the Grange, consisting of Daisy, Lilian and Karminie, with Mr. Huntingdon, Mr. Lancaster, Major Newcombe and Lieut. Sommerville. At a little distance from them, and in full uniform, was seated Col. Ranford, and next to him a stout lady dressed in a rich black satin with a small black hat trimmed with ostrich plumes. She was strikingly plain, and looked ten years his senior. He saw them and bowed with a smile so sad that even Mr. Huntingdon noticed it; Lilian alone understood the anguish of that look.

"Surely that cannot be Mrs. Ranford," exclaimed Karminie. "Why she is a perfect fright."

In her excitement she spoke so loud that the lady turned and looked at her, raising an eyebrow which was naturally above its fellow, and remarking to the gentleman by her side:

"Who is that ill-bred girl dressed in dark green velvet? I think I noticed just now that you recognized their party. I wish you would not know such persons when you are with me, Col. Ranford."

"She is Miss Granville. I think her very nice, and those with her are the Huntingdons. You would be glad to be as rich as they are."

"Indeed! I tell you, Col. Ranford, that you are not to know those low people. I insist upon it."

He only laughed and sneeringly replied: "I shall know whom I like; you are forgetting yourself; I beg you not to make a scene here."

"No! please don't," said Mrs. Waller, who was with the Ranfords.

"Having those two officers with them," continued Mrs. Ranford, "flirting with the girls I suppose, and that old man allowing it."

"The one to the right of Miss Huntingdon is her cousin, Major Newcombe, of the Bengal Lancers, and the other is Lieut. Sommerville belonging to the — Foresters; he is engaged to be married to her," answered Col. Waller, who was seated next to his wife. "I think you ought to call upon them; they are really very nice people."

Mrs. Ranford sniffed the air and replied: "You are talking most absurdly, Col. Waller; you will next expect me to call on the people living in the highways and hedges."

"I do not think they would receive you," chimed in a youngster from behind, who chanced to hear the conversation.

"What are you sniffing the air for in that manner, and making such an — of yourself," interposed the Colonel. "Are you inhaling the odour of the flowers?"

Mrs. Ranford only grunted and treated the question with contempt.

Mrs. Ranford had arrived a day or two previous to this; and the Colonel and she were living for a time in the same boarding-house with Col. and Mrs. Waller.

After the ceremony of the opening of the Exhibition came to a close, and the people had made a movement to go home, a tall handsome woman came up to the Huntingdons and spoke to Karminie, bowing at the same time to Mr. Lancaster. She wore deep mourning which heightened the charms of her clear ruddy complexion; she had large expressive dark eyes and full pouting lips, which gave piquance to the tones of her musical voice. Beside her, was a grey-headed elderly man, whom she introduced as her uncle.

"How very happy I am to see you again, *mademoiselle*," she said addressing Karminie. "Will you please introduce me to this young lady. I think you mentioned that she is your cousin."

She spoke with a foreign accent, for she was Italian.

"Yes," replied Karminie, introducing Signora Patellani to Lilian.

"We shall be glad to see you if you will be good enough to call on us, Signora," said Lilian. "Our address is the Grange, Ballygunge."

"Thank you very much," she answered. "I shall come soon."

They then parted and drove home.

"What a very beautiful woman Signora Patellani is," remarked Mr. Huntingdon.

"And she is very nice too," answered Karminie. "She took care of me on board when I was so seedy. Lilian has invited her to come over. I am afraid you will not be proof against her fascinations, uncle."

"Nonsense, child, she would not look at an old fogey like me."

"That's left to be seen, uncle Mervyne; you are very bewitching in your own way."

"You naughty disrespectful puss," replied Mr. Huntingdon.

"I wonder if that old cat, Mrs. Ranford, intends calling at the Grange," said Karminie. "What an awful look she gave me. I fancy she heard every word I said about her. I am sure she is jealous of the Colonel. What did he marry her for? He surely can't care for her—how sadly he looked at you, Lilian. I have only met him once, but if she should ever come with him I will start a flirtation with him, on purpose to tease her. I detest that woman; there is something so vile and wicked in her face, and will it not be a disappointment to Mrs. Pry? She will have to look somewhere else for a husband for Edith; she may now take compassion on a more subordinate officer; what do you say to it Major Newcombe?"

"We may take her to Rowdypore, Miss Granville, where another certain young lady contemplates an attack upon the hearts of those poor unfortunate fellows," replied the Major.

"Are there any nice Lieutenants in Rowdypore, Mr. Sommerville?" asked Karminie.

"Yes, very nice indeed; there is my worthy self, Miss Karminie."

"Any eligible ones?" she asked.

"Marriageable, do you mean?" he answered. "We have a very fine fellow on the staff, Thornycliffe, Assistant Superintendent at the factory; he would be a most humorous companion with the grimaces he makes."

"We must pay the little station a visit, but not until the gaiety of the cold season is over," interrupted Lillian. "My house in Rowdypore will be vacated by that time, so we need not rent one."

They had reached the Grange, and the gentlemen took their leave. Major Newcombe had an engagement to dinner, while Lieut. Sommerville returned to Rowdypore.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DAY AFTER THE EXHIBITION.

ON the following day, Signora Patellani called at the Grange. She attracted most people with her charming manner, conjoined with her recent widowhood and youth. She had been a widow nearly twelve months and was still in very deep mourning. Her dead black silk dress was covered over with cr pe, and a mall black cap encircled her raven locks which fell in small rings over her marble brow. As she softly and gracefully entered the room, Lilian rose to greet her.

She had only been married three short years to Signor Patellani, an Italian merchant, when she lost her husband at Milan. It was almost a year since her widowhood, that she had now returned to India, to reside with her uncle, who was head partner of the firm in which her husband was, and he was her only living relative. Karminie and Daisy entered the room shortly after Signora Patellani's arrival. Lilian persuaded her to remain for the day, so with a note to her uncle, she sent away the brougham.

The four ladies were sitting and chatting pleasantly, when a heavy barouche and a pair of large fat lazy bays came up the carriage-drive to the Grange, and within a short space of time a servant brought into the room, on a small silver tray, a card, and Lilian reading aloud "Mrs. Ranford" sent *salaam*, and at the same time gave the man the card to take to her father.

The rustling of a thick purple silk, and a bustling sound announced the lady, who gave two fingers to Lilian to shake, and with a slight inclination of the head acknowledged the presence of the other ladies. She seated herself on one of the sofas, when a gentle step approached, and a soft musical voice addressed her saying :

"Mrs. Ranford, I trust you have not quite forgotten me, although I fear I am much changed. I am Lucretia Patellani."

"I have every reason to remember you, Signora," answered Mrs. Ranford; "so your husband is dead, poor man; and it was you whom your uncle was escorting about at the Exhibition yesterday. I think it indecent for a young widow to leave her own country and come to a foreign land, to hamper her poor old uncle so, as if he could be looking after a young woman like you gallivanting all over the world, and I consider it a shame that you should treat him so badly, humph!" grunted Mrs. Ranford, angrily stamping her foot upon the carpet.

Karminic had done her utmost to keep serious all this time; but she could no longer control her mirth, and with a shriek she burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. All Daisy and Lilian's frowning at her only helped to increase her spirits. Mr. Huntingdon, coming into the room and shaking hands with Mrs. Ranford, looked at his niece in surprise.

"Oh! don't mind her; she is only indulging in a little fun at a perfect fright as she designates me," laughed Mrs. Ranford; "it is only a pity that Col. Ranford is not here to join her in her mirth."

At this remark Signora Patellani laughed out too, and with all Mr. Huntingdon's good breeding he could not repress a smile.

"I hope, madam," he apologetically said, "that you do not think my niece means any discourtesy to you."

"Oh! no, Mr. Huntingdon. Col. and Mrs. Waller persuaded me to call at the Grange, assuring me that I could not wish to meet with nicer people than its inmates, or be better received anywhere. I must acknowledge that I have had a more mirthful reception than I anticipated, and your family being such very dear friends of Col. Ranford's, I thought I should do myself the honour of calling upon you."

"Indeed, I am very glad you have been good enough to come," replied Mr. Huntingdon. "Col. Ranford is, as you say, a dear friend, and I have a great respect for him."

"A dear friend of yours, ha ! ha !" laughed Mrs. Ranford ; "a very dear friend, indeed ! does Miss Granville also think so ?"

"I fail to understand you, Mrs. Ranford," said Mr. Huntingdon, colouring and looking confused ; "my niece scarcely knows the Colonel."

"Yes, I suppose so—I suppose so ; it's no concern of mine," answered Mrs. Ranford rising to go, and bowing to the ladies she passed out of the open door, Mr. Huntingdon escorting her down to her carriage.

CHAPTER X.

MEDDLESOME PRIORY.

"It is really shameful for Col. Ranford to have passed himself off as an unmarried man!" said Mrs. Pry addressing her daughter, "and to have paid you such marked attention, Edith. You should never have encouraged it. Perhaps Capt. D'Oyley or Major Newcombe might have proposed, if you had not been so foolish; you have no discernment whatever in you."

"It was you who suggested my encouraging the Colonel," answered Edith. "You are so mortified now to find he has a wife, that you are putting the blame upon me; besides, he never paid me any marked attention; it is only you who think so. I am sure he likes Lilian better."

"Well we must not show them we are piqued by the news; we must make friends with Mrs. Ranford, my love. I shall call upon her during her stay in Calcutta, and say that the Colonel had spoken so nicely of her that I have presumed upon it and called. She will be able to introduce you into good society, and get you married soon; and then, my dear, we shall look down upon the other people," spoke Mrs. Pry.

"And where do you intend to receive Mrs. Ranford should she be fool enough to return your visit. Do you intend receiving visitors in these two dismal looking rooms?" asked Edith. "You let out every nook and corner of the house; of course we cannot see society when you live so meanly."

"Keep quiet you minx; for whom am I saving all this money but for you; but I will live better; I will give a ball, and open out the drawing-room, and give nice little tennis parties, and have musical evenings like the Huntingdons do."

"You always promise to do so, but it never happens," replied Edith.

"And," continued Mrs. Pry, "I do not approve of your talking so much to Mr. Noodle; he has no position at all; he is only a Sub-Accountant in the bank. Lilian and Karminie know how to get the best men for themselves, and to leave the refuse for the other young ladies."

"The Bank of Elegance is considered one of the swell banks in Calcutta," answered Edith indignantly, "and Mr. Noodle's income is from six to seven hundred a month."

"Six to seven hundred fiddlesticks!" shrieked Mrs. Pry; "four hundred is all that he gets. I will not consent to your marrying any uncovenanted man, or any non-commissioned officer, do you hear me, Miss Impudence, you disrespectful cat."

"You are a cat yourself," retaliated Edith. "I wish you would give me my money. I am not going to the next ball with an old dress, or a patchy-looking one made by a native tailor, when Lilian and Karminie will both get theirs from an English firm."

"They can afford it; Lilian Huntingdon is an heiress. If you are more friendly with her, she might lend you a nice dress; it is only for a night," said Mrs. Pry.

"I will go and beg of Mr. Huntingdon to give me a dress, and say that you are too stingy to make me up a decent one," Edith replied. "I will ask Lilian to invite me for a week to the Grange. I am miserable here and starved nearly to death. You do not even send me for a change to the hills. The whole of last summer I remained in the plains, while other girls were away, and came back with rosy cheeks; here am I, pale as a ghost, thin as a starved rat, never see any society. What chance have I against the other girls?"

"You are a curse to my life," screamed Mrs. Pry. "You are always spending money; you will send me to jail in my old age."

"The sooner you go there the better," retorted Edith.

"Dare you speak to me in that disrespectful way, you worthless girl," cried Mrs. Pry, taking hold of a stick and

chasing Edith, who ran out of the room upsetting chairs, tea-pots, and everything which debarred her exit.

In the midst of the confusion a brougham drove under the portico, and a portly looking person, whom the reader will recognize as Mrs. Ranford, got out of the carriage, and finding no one to announce her walked into the room.

"Dear me, what a dreadful scene," exclaimed the intruder. "Good morning, Madam, I understand from the ticket at the gate that your upper flat is to let; may I look at it?"

"Yes, certainly," meekly responded Mrs. Pry smoothing down with her hand her dress and dishevelled hair, and escorting the pompous party up the stairs.

"I hope, Madam, this is not a noisy house as I want the flat for friends of mine—Lieutenant-General Hummingbird and his family, who are coming from Simla."

"It is a remarkably quiet house; my daughter and myself are the only inmates at present," answered Mrs. Pry.

"I shall then tell my husband Colonel Ranford to call and see the flat to-morrow morning before I decide upon engaging it," she said.

"I shall be very happy to see him, the dear good man; he is an intimate friend of mine; it gives me great pleasure to make the acquaintance of his wife," the old hypocrite smilingly replied.

But Mrs. Ranford was in no mood to be patronized; she turned furious with rage.

"Dear good man; the Colonel, an intimate friend," said Mrs. Ranford repeating Mrs. Pry's words. "Why, what do you know of my husband, Madam? And I beg you will consider this visit of mine a purely business one."

"Yes, of course, I shall; please do not get angry with me. I meant no offence by what I said. I thought I might do you a friendly turn if you would allow me. I have met the Colonel at the Grange, where he is very intimate," answered Mrs. Pry.

Mrs. Ranford thought for a moment and wondered if there was any truth in what this woman said; anyhow she would find out, so she cunningly asked:

"How do you know that my husband is intimate at the Grange?"

"I have often met him there, and he seems to pay a deal of attention to Miss Huntingdon; she is a very designing girl, and if I might suggest it, perhaps it would be as well to set a watch over him," said Mrs. Pry.

"It is Miss Granville you mean, not Miss Huntingdon," answered Mrs. Ranford angrily, vexed to find that her judgment should have erred; "and why should his visiting at the Grange be attended with sufficient harm to require a watch to be set upon his actions?"

"Oh! nothing at all; I meant no harm," spoke Mrs. Pry submissively; "and it may be Miss Granville. I made a mistake, you are quite right; the Colonel is a dear good man, but the best of men would be led away by encouragement."

Mrs. Pry was half frightened by Mrs. Ranford's display of temper, and fearing to enrage her, and yet anxious to do her a service, she allowed Mrs. Ranford to think that it was Karminie and not Lilian whom she meant.

"Thank you for the information," said Mrs. Ranford, condescendingly giving her fat hand to Mrs. Pry; she was anxious to get home and revolve the matter in her own mind so as to decide on her future course of action.

When Mrs. Pry returned to her room, she found Edith lying in bed with a pretended pain in her leg, in order to prevent the return of another ebullition on her mother's part.

"Well, and has she taken the flat?" enquired Edith.

"Yes, my love, nearly taken it, and wants it for a great swell, Lieutenant-General Hummingbird,—such a funny name; I am sure you cannot guess who the lady was."

"Lady," interposed Edith, "she spoke and behaved more like a washerwoman; why who is she?"

"Who, but Mrs. Ranford, and turned so friendly with me; she took my hand in hers and invited me to call upon her, my dear."

"I am sure she never asked you; but you will nevertheless intrude on her," Edith replied.

On returning home, Mrs. Ranford informed her husband that she had seen a suitable flat for General Hummingbird and his family at Mrs. Pry's house, "Meddlesome Priory," and requested him to go next morning and look at it; but when the Colonel heard to whom the house belonged, nothing on earth would persuade him to go; and he said that he thought that that part of Theatre Road where "Meddlesome Priory" was situated was not a desirable residence for the General. There was a furious altercation, of course, in which Mrs. Ranford took the more active part, but Col. Ranford was firm, and thus the project of engaging the flat fell through.

The next evening Mrs. Pry wrote to Mrs. Ranford, asking if she had changed her mind about taking the flat. Mrs. Ranford's reply was that she had communicated with the General, and was awaiting his answer.

When some more days passed, and no letter arrived, Mrs. Pry ordered her phaeton and drove to Mrs. Ranford's residence. "This," thought she, "would be a nice excuse for going over."

CHAPTER XI.

THE CONCERT.

FRIDAYS were the days devoted to afternoon concerts at the Exhibition. They were held in the open quadrangle of the Museum before the Europe Courts, and the performers were Opera-singers. It was on one of these occasions that Daisy and Karminie, for the first time, made up their minds to go.

Lilian had gone to Barrackpore on a visit to an old school-fellow of hers, who had married and come out to India. Mr. Huntingdon, having some business in town, promised to join the girls at the concert at a later hour. Karminie looked very pretty in her pale pink Indian Cashmere, with a Gainsborough hat trimmed with ostrich tips of pink and red, while her little hands were encased in kid gloves of the same colour as her dress. The tan, which was on her skin when she first arrived, had quite disappeared. Her clear complexion and her curly fair hair, looking soft and pretty, reminded an observer of one of those enchanting wax-figures to be seen in the show windows of a hair-dresser's shop in Europe; only that Karminie had a deal of animation.

A number of benches were placed about the quadrangle for the use of visitors; there were no reserved seats; each spectator paid a rupee and sat where he liked. The raised marble platform, where the Duke of Connaught sat on the opening day, was occupied by the singers, and a piano was placed upon it. The pianist had taken his seat, and the second soprano, a nice-looking Italian, in crimson satin skirt with black velvet bodice, laced in front with gold cord, bowed to the audience, and was about to commence her song, when a party of persons with two or three dark and greasy-looking children came up near Daisy and Karminie and were motioned by their guardians to take the vacant space

on the bench, upon which they were seated. An angry look from Karminie induced their elders to call the children away. Instantly Karminie placed her parasol across the bench to prevent any further intrusion, but such was not to be her destiny, for almost immediately after this, she noticed a short spare-built man, with fair hair and light blue eyes, walking up to her; he stopped and asked in a weak voice addressing Karminie: "May I be permitted to take this vacant seat? I am unable to find a suitable one anywhere?"

Crossly Karminie moves away her parasol, and looking at Daisy, who is quietly smiling at her, answers the stranger: "Yes, certainly, if you are unable to find another seat. I placed my parasol across the bench expecting it to be a sufficient safeguard."

"I noticed your doing so," he smilingly replied, sitting himself beside Karminie. "I hope you will forgive my intruding upon you?"

At this moment the singing began, and further conversation for the time being was put a stop to; not for long though, for the little man seemed determined to speak, and after giving Karminie a scrutinizing look he said: "Is this the first time that you have heard these singers?"

"No, I have heard them before at the Opera," she answered.

After a short pause he again enquired: "Have you just come out to India?"

"Yes," says Karminie rather crossly, "I came out in October, but I was born in the country."

"In Calcutta?"

"No, at Moorshedabad."

"Very feverish country, is it not?" he ventures to remark.

"I believe it is," remarks Karminie.

"I was born in Madras, but was sent to England when a little boy."

"Indeed!" replies Karminie opening her eyes wide in surprise at his perseveringly continuing the conversation. "Do you not think we are losing the song?"

"I do not care much for the song; she is not one of the first singers. Do you care to hear it?"

"I should, indeed, if you would be good enough to permit me," she answers, and glances at Daisy, who is still smiling, and to whom she whispers, "what a bore this man is."

The little man evidently heard the remark, for Karminie noticed a broad smile upon his face.

The song has concluded, and the pianist has removed his fingers from the keys. There is a short silence which is broken by a hum of voices among the audience.

Karminie's special aversion again begins to speak with the assurance of a man who plumes himself on his position. He asks: "Would you tell me your name if you do not think me too inquisitive?"

"Miss Granville," answers Karminie. "I hope you are satisfied; are there any other questions you would care to put to me?"

"I trust you will not be angry with me. I should like you to give me your address," he said.

"I am living with my uncle and his daughter, Mr. and Miss Huntingdon, at the Grange, Ballygunge," she replied.

"Thank you," he answered; "may I call?"

"You must excuse me if I say that I am scarcely acquainted with you; I do not know how my uncle would take it. I fancy you are a mofussilite, and have not been long in Calcutta" (Karminie would have liked to add, "this accounts for your strange conduct").

"I am a mofussilite," he answered. "I have come from Dustipore."

"Dustipore," repeated Karminie, "you must then belong to a silk factory."

"No" (with a smile); "I am A. D. Henry, Joint Magistrate."

"Ah!" said Karminie laughing at her mistake and looking at Daisy, who remarked in an undertone: ("I think I have met him before, I remember the name; ask him if he was at

Mrs. Pennywinkle's dance at Naini Tal ; and if he noticed Dr. and Mrs. Mowbray and myself"). Karminie conveyed the message.

"My friend, Miss Richardson, says she has met you before at a dance in Mrs. Pennywinkle's house, Naini Tal ; do you remember having seen her with Dr. and Mrs. Mowbray ?"

"Yes, of course, I do, and remember Miss Richardson very well indeed, for I had the honour of dancing with her." He rises and shakes hands with Daisy.

"Now may I call ?" he asks of Karminie. "Miss Richardson will stand security for my good behaviour."

"I am afraid it would be taking upon myself a grave responsibility, Mr. Henry," spoke Daisy.

"Then I shall have to refer you to one of the fellows of the Club," he replied.

"There is Mr. Huntingdon," exclaimed Karminie. "He will decide the critical question, and make it as favourable as he can for you, Mr. Henry."

Mr. Huntingdon looked round the place, and his eye at last caught sight of the bench upon which the little party were seated who were of interest to him.

"Uncle," said Karminie, as he approached. "Here is a gentleman from the district of Dustipore, a very old friend of Daisy's, and who is particularly anxious to make your acquaintance ; he has cross-questioned me like a criminal, and thinks the case worth further investigation, so he has asked permission to call at the Grange."

Mr. Huntingdon bowed to Mr. Henry, and took his offered hand saying : "He would be very pleased to receive in his house any friend of Miss Richardson's."

Mr. Henry was glad at the favourable turn of affairs, and said he should call the next day.

After the other singers had accomplished their parts, the little party on the bench went round to look at the Indian Courts, accompanied by Mr. Henry. He offered his arm to Karminie, and walked a little in advance of Mr. Huntingdon and Daisy. Karminie, after having snubbed

Mr. Henry, tried to make up for it by chatting pleasantly the whole time ; and Mr. Henry seemed to be in ecstasies. They admired all the beautiful exhibits, and she promised him to come again some day, at an early hour, when they could have a good look about the place. They went round to the band-stand where the Nizam of Hyderabad's band played, after which they walked to the tea tent, refreshed themselves each with a cup of tea, and lastly they seated themselves comfortably upon a bench outside the tent and watched the passers-by. Mr. Huntingdon and Daisy walked up and down the path where the people promenaded, and here they were soon joined by Mr. Lancaster. At last Daisy grew so tired that she was obliged to rest herself on the bench beside Karminie. They were not long seated together, when Karminie grew restless and wanted to walk, so Mr. Henry offered her his arm.

She took it saying : " Does it not seem strange to you, Mr. Henry, that you should be walking and talking to me like an old friend instead of an acquaintance of a brief hour or two ? "

" It is one of the happiest moments of my life this," he answered. " Let us forget our short acquaintance, and think that we have known each other for years. I did not anticipate that so great a pleasure was in store for me when I left the Club this afternoon to come to the Exhibition."

He gently pressed her hand in saying this, and a faint blush rose to Karminie's cheek.

" I really do not know how I am to get on when I get back to Dustipore," he continued. " A little face with its dark eyes will be continually haunting me, and making me forget all my work."

" Alas," answered Karminie, drooping her eyelids ; " it will be very hard for me also. I shall be going about my uncle's house, pining and sighing, with a vision ever before me."

Mr. Henry looked at Karminie, and but for a slight smile at the corners of her mouth, which he observed,

he might have been tempted to believe what this little coquette said. Karminie noticed the look, and she said :

"Oh! Mr. Henry, what flirts men are, and you are the greatest and the naughtiest I have ever met; if I had been foolish enough to believe all your flattering sayings my poor little head would have more than enough to think of, and my poor little life would be crushed under its after sorrow when I turned to find it was only a myth I had indulged in."

"I am sorry you should think so ill of me, Miss Granville," he exclaimed in a pained voice.

"Mr. Henry," she said, "do you expect me on so short an acquaintance to believe all that you have been telling me this evening?"

Mr. Henry said nothing in reply, but he looked distressed. Karminie felt very unhappy for the remark she had made; she softly pressed the arm upon which her hand lay and said :

"Will you forgive me, Mr. Henry? I am so truly sorry for what I just now said. I never really meant to pain you."

Mr. Henry raised his eyes to Karminie's face and noticed hers were glistening with tears.

"I do forgive you dear girl," he answered, taking her hand and raising it to his lips.

It was nearly dusk now, and these two naughty little persons were at a little distance from the crowd. They suddenly heard a heavy step behind them, and a voice said rather cheerily : "Good evening, Miss Granville."

Karminie started, and Mr. Henry looked anything but pleased at the interruption.

"You here, Mr. Appleton?" replied Karminie, giving her hand to the rather stout and florid-looking gentleman who had accosted her. "When did you come? I did not expect to see you; have you seen my uncle? He is with Miss Richardson and Mr. Lancaster seated upon yonder bench," saying which she pointed to the tea tent with her parasol.

"Thank you, I have seen him, and he sent me on to you. I am surprised to find you did not expect me after making the appointment; but I will not disturb you," he added, raising his hat and walking away before Karminie could give him an answer.

"What does he mean," said Mr. Henry looking annoyed. "Did you make an appointment with that gentleman?"

"No, I cannot exactly call it an appointment; we were here the other evening, and he joined us. I remarked to my cousin Lillian that I should like to come to the next concert the following Friday; my uncle said he could not accompany us as he had an engagement in town on that day, but would drop in later on; and Mr. Appleton offered to meet us here, and I said, yes, do come, we shall be very glad to see you; but I had forgotten since then, and never meant to be rude to him," Karminie explained.

"What an absurd man he must be to get huffed about so small a matter," Mr. Henry replied.

Mr. Huntingdon with Daisy and Mr. Lancaster came up at this juncture, and Karminie said: "What was the matter with Mr. Appleton, uncle? He seemed to be in a bad humour."

"He did seem peculiar," answered Mr. Huntingdon; "he asked me where you were and followed you up; then returned to us almost immediately and said goodby. I am afraid you had something to do with ruffling his feathers, you little puss, unless it was that he had a pressing engagement."

"We had better be going home now," suggested Daisy, "it is getting near our dinner hour" (looking at her watch).

"Have you got your carriage here?" asked Mr. Henry, "for, if not, I beg you will use mine. I can walk to the Club as it is so near."

"Thank you very much for the offer," replied Mr. Huntingdon; "but I fancy my landaulette is in waiting. We hope soon to have the pleasure of seeing you again. Will you be making a long stay in Calcutta?"

"I do not expect I shall be here longer than a week at the outside. I then go home on furlough some time in April.

If you have no objection I shall call on you to-morrow during the day," he answered.

"Yes, do come," said Mr. Huntingdon, "we shall be very happy to see you; and I expect my daughter home in the morning."

They had reached the grand entrance, and Mr. Henry said goodby as he assisted Karminie into the carriage.

"You are coming with us Lancaster, are you not?" asked Mr. Huntingdon.

"I shall be delighted to do so, but I am not in evening dress," he answered.

"We can wait at the boarding house until your bearer gets your things together and mounts the coach box," suggested Karminie, directing the coachman to drive through Russell Street.

On reaching home, they found Lilian comfortably reclining on a sofa in the drawing-room reading a book.

"You good people have come at last," she said, as they walked into the room. "I have been here nearly an hour. Colonel and Mrs. Waller were at Barrackpore, and as they were coming down I accompanied them."

"I am so glad to see you back my pet," said Mr. Huntingdon affectionately greeting her. "It seems weeks since you were here."

"Why Pa! I have not been away even two days."

"What will you do when Lily gets married uncle," chimed in Karminie. "I fancy you will be wishing to accompany her on her honeymoon trip. We shall have to get Signora to console you."

"Be quiet you naughty girl; you always say more than is required," spoke Mr. Huntingdon. "Lilian," he said, "ask her about her new sweetheart whom she picked up at the Exhibition through Daisy's good offices; they were so happy in each other's company that it was with difficulty I brought Karminie home."

"Oh! for shame uncle," exclaimed Karminie, "you put all your failings upon poor me! You will see him to-morrow Lilian; uncle has insisted upon his calling here."

Mr. Huntingdon laughed in answer to his niece's impudence.

"Who, and what is he?" enquired Lilian of her father.

"Only a silkworm," replied Karminie placing her hand upon Mr. Huntingdon's mouth to prevent his speaking. "Now uncle, you are not to say a word about him; let Lily judge for herself."

"Silkworm," repeated Lilian, "is he a planter?"

"Yes," answered Karminie, "he plants or rather puts away."

"But do let me know something about him," persisted Lilian, "if only to keep me on guard."

"He is a dear little man; Lily do wait until you see him instead of being so impatient," said Karminie.

Lilian knew that further questioning would be useless, so she gave it up with a sigh.

CHAPTER XII

SOONDREE AYAH AND RAM RAM.

MRS. PRY, on arriving at the boarding house, sent her card up to Mrs. Ranford.

"What does that old devil want here," said Col. Ranford not very politely as he received the card and passed it to his wife.

"She has come to see me," she answered.

"Come to see you, which means mischief of course," remarked the Colonel; "for when you two get together it is an omen of evil."

"Please do not concern yourself about me, Col. Ranford. I shall do what I choose. I am mistress of my own actions, and will brook no interference."

Col. Ranford smiled and left the room; he took his hat and went down the backstairs as Mrs. Pry came up the front ones.

"I hope you will forgive my intrusion," said Mrs. Pry entering Mrs. Ranford's small sitting-room and shrinkingly giving out her hand, which the other lady patronizingly received. "I only came," continued Mrs. Pry, "to enquire if you have yet heard from General Hummingbird about my flat, as I have had three offers for it since you called; but I should prefer giving it to a friend of yours."

"Thank you," replied Mrs. Ranford, "but the truth is that the matter rests with the Colonel; he is at liberty to take any flat he likes for the General; but I cannot get him to go and see your flat; he resolutely refuses to go to your house, and says the place will not suit."

"Refuses to go to my house," said Mrs. Pry in a shrill voice which she tried to modulate, "what have I done to offend the dear man?"

"You had better ask the dear man yourself," answered Mrs. Ranford, whereupon she called to the Colonel (who was by

that time whirling along the streets of Calcutta in a ticca gharry). As there was no response, she called again, and in answer there appeared Mrs. Ranford's confidential maid, Soondree Ayah, an old Hindoo woman. She made a *salaam* to Mrs. Pry, and then addressed her mistress saying: "*Colonel sahib bhar gyi hai; piche ka seerie sa.*"

"Humph," grunted Mrs. Ranford, "I suppose you have understood the ayah, Mrs. Pry."

"Yes," answered Mrs. Pry, and her sharp green eyes wore a malicious look.

"You mentioned the other day, Mrs. Pry," said Mrs. Ranford coming to the point, "that you thought the Colonel was too frequent a visitor at the Grange, and that a watch ought to be set upon his actions. Now how is it to be done? The only trustworthy person I have about me is my ayah, and she could not run after him wherever he goes without being discovered."

"Of course not; but she may be able to get some one who can be trusted," suggested Mrs. Pry.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Ranford, "and I shall also have to trust you. If Col. Ranford were to discover that I employ a spy to watch him I would not answer for consequences. What I wish to propose is that it should all be done through you. It would not do for me to take an active part in it."

"I shall be happy to serve you in any way I can, and you may rest assured, Mrs. Ranford, that I will not say a word about it to any one, not even to my own daughter Edith," replied Mrs. Pry.

"Thanks," said Mrs. Ranford, "and later on when we have succeeded in our plans, you shall have your reward, Mrs. Pry. I will take your daughter for a drive sometimes, and will also ask her to Rowdypore when I go to live there, and get her to see a little nice society. Lieutenant Thornycliffe is there; and he is in a very good position."

Mrs. Pry's eyes sparkled now and her mouth relaxed into a grin.

Mrs. Ranford laughed and indulged in the reflection, "what

an old fool this is ; I shall make a tool of this imbecile ; and as for taking Edith out, or asking her to Rowdypore, it will happen when two suns rise instead of one." Soondree Ayah was then asked if she had any relative who could be relied on, and who would implicitly follow the instructions of the *memsahib*, referring to Mrs. Pry. Soondree Ayah recommended her son, Ram Ram, a slip of a boy, but a very precocious child for his age, and sharp enough to follow the Colonel wherever he went without discovery. Mrs. Ranford promised the ayah *buksheesh* if her son proved himself both smart and discreet.

The ayah was delighted, and making two or three *salaams* said that she would serve her mistress faithfully, and that she would only consent to accept the present on account of her son. Soondree Ayah had served Mrs. Ranford for nineteen years. She had been a good servant and had a deal of cunning in her nature ; she had often conveyed little messages to her mistress about the Colonel, and Mrs. Ranford had listened to every little tale. She had been so servicable to her mistress in this particular that the latter could do nothing without consulting her *confidante*. Although Col. Ranford felt that he had married beneath him, and knew how very deceitful his wife was, still he would not have believed her capable of stooping to so base and mean a thing as to set a watch upon his actions.

On the following day Ram Ram, accompanied by his mother, went to Mrs. Pry's house to receive his instructions. Mrs. Pry described Karminie and instructed the boy that he was to follow the Colonel furtively wherever he went. Ram Ram being an intelligent lad promised to be on his guard, and said that he would implicitly carry out Mrs. Pry's instructions. Edith was spending the day out when Soondree Ayah and Ram Ram came, so she was ignorant of everything that happened. But when the woman came again and Edith saw her, Mrs. Pry explained that she came on important business, concerning some betelnut gardens on which she wanted Mrs. Pry to advance her money. Edith, however, was not satisfied with this explanation and made

up her mind to find out the cause of these visits, so she quietly bided her time, and when Soondree Ayah appeared a third time she slipped into the adjoining room and put her ear to the key-hole. She heard but indistinctly the conversation between them. The ayah spoke in low tones; she said that her son had been going after the Colonel for some days—"Club—*Miss Sahib bhargya*." Edith could hear no more; she again caught the words "*lal bal*," and knew whom the ayah meant by the fair hair. She was positive that it was Karminie; then she heard "*Colonel Sahib*," whom she made sure was Col. Ranford; these two were being watched. The woman then took her leave after mumbling a few words to Mrs. Pry which it was impossible to catch.

CHAPTER XIII.

AT THE OPERA.

PRECISELY at one o'clock the next day, and true to his promise, Mr. Henry, in an Office Jaun drawn by a white pony, drove up the gravel path which led to the Grange and sent in his card—"Mr. A. D. Henry, Bengal Civil Service." Daisy and Lilian were both seated in the drawing-room at the time he came in, and Daisy made the necessary introduction between Lilian and him. Mr. Henry took the vacant seat upon the sofa near Lilian and was conversing, when Karminie made her appearance in the room, followed by Mr. Huntingdon.

"I hope you were not overfatigued after your long walk at the Exhibition yesterday," said Mr. Henry, addressing Karminie; "and have you managed since then to conciliate Mr. Appleton for your unkind behaviour towards him?"

"No, I have not seen him yet," she replied.

"Mr. Appleton is a great admirer of Karminie's," observed Lilian; "he came out in the same steamer with her and called to see her the day after her arrival. I should be sorry to learn that she had offended him."

"Please do not talk of him, Lilian, for he behaved like a maniac. Ask uncle how strangely he acted, but if I am in any way to blame for what he did I shall write him a nice little note," she answered.

"I should not worry myself about it at all," spoke Mr. Huntingdon, "I suppose it will come right in time when he sees through his own folly, or we may send him an invitation for tennis to-morrow."

"If you have no engagement for this evening," said Mr. Henry, "might I suggest our going to the opera. I have taken a box."

"Oh! how nice that would be," exclaimed Karminie, "I should be delighted to go."

"Then we must really go," replied Mr. Henry. "Let me see, there are four seats and there are five of us."

"I shall also take a box," said Mr. Huntingdon; "there will be plenty of room then. Lilian and Karminie can go with you Mr. Henry, and Miss Richardson with me. What do you think of the plan, Daisy," he asked, turning to her.

"Of course, Daisy would like to have Mr. Lancaster, but feels too shy to express her wishes," remarked Karminie; "and uncle, I am sure, you would like to have Lucretia Patellani?"

"What a very bright thought, Karminie," answered her uncle. "We must not fail to act upon your suggestion. Lilian," he said, "will you be good enough to write to Signora Patellani and Lancaster and ask them to dinner this evening; Mr. Henry must also come and I must go round and secure another box."

The matter being arranged satisfactorily Mr. Henry rose to go and Lilian went into her room to write the two letters.

Both invitations were accepted, and in the evening Signora came dressed in a trailing black velvet robe, her arms and shoulders bare and on her raven tresses shone a star of diamonds.

Signora Patellani had taken off her weeds and burst upon the inmates of the Grange in all her splendour of form, the loveliest of lovely women. Her well-developed bust like white-veined marble looked as though a sculptor had chiseled it, and her large black luminous eyes shone with all the fire of her spirit.

Lilian and Karminie were dressed alike in white *broché* satin, embroidered with pearls. Lilian had a spray of water-lilies down the bodice of her dress, while Karminie wore marguerites. Daisy looked equally nice in a ruby velvet embellished with yellow silk cord and rubies set in gold. Mr. Lancaster looked admiringly at her and whispered

something to her as he placed her in the carriage which was to convey them with Mr. Huntingdon and Signora to the opera. The two girls went with Mr. Henry in his barouche drawn by a pair of greys. Mr. Henry had unfortunately forgotten and left his box ticket at the Club which necessitated their driving to it before going to the opera.

"Rigoletto," the most touching of operas, and which was on, that night, had already begun when they entered the house. Every box and nearly every seat was taken. Lilian looked around and recognized many persons of her acquaintance, and among these were Col. and Mrs. Ranford and Capt. D'Oyley, who had returned to Calcutta that very day and was putting up in the same house with the Ranfords.

Capt. D'Oyley suggested to Col. Ranford that they should go out for a smoke during the first interval. They had drawn a few whiffs from their cigars when Capt. D'Oyley, turning to the Colonel, said: "If you do not care to smoke we will go in and speak to Miss Huntingdon. Who is that fair girl with her, and who is the gentleman in the box?"

"The young lady is Miss Granville, her cousin, and the gentleman is Henry, a young civilian. I have met him at the Club," answered the Colonel.

"One beau between two belles," remarked Capt. D'Oyley. "Come along, Ranford, let us go in."

The Colonel threw away his cigar and accompanied his friend to Mr. Henry's box.

Col. Ranford had only called at the Grange once since his return from Simla, and that was after Karminie's arrival. Lilian thought she had schooled herself sufficiently to meet the Colonel with calmness, but when she again saw him she felt the treacherous color rising to her face and betraying her feelings in a blush. Karminie looked at her and observed it, and to screen her cousin she quickly said:

"It is quite an age since we last saw you, Colonel. You seem to have deserted the Grange since my arrival. I hope I have not been the cause of driving you away?"

"Scarcely so, Miss Granville," he answered, "or I should have avoided you this evening."

He then introduced Capt. D'Oyley to her and spoke to Lilian and to Mr. Henry. Mrs. Ranford looked as dark as a thundercloud ready to burst upon the earth when she saw her husband and Capt. D'Oyley enter Mr. Henry's box. "Let him come back," she said to herself, "I shall then know what to do."

At this moment of vexation Signora Patellani and Mr. Huntingdon lifted the curtain and walked into her box.

"You looked so lonely here all by yourself that I urged Mr. Huntingdon to bring me to you," said Signora, giving Mrs. Ranford her hand, which that lady frigidly took.

"I ought to be extremely grateful for the consideration," she answered in a sarcastic tone, and turning her attention to Mr. Huntingdon she addressed her conversation to him.

The Colonel, after talking to Lilian, went round to see Daisy, and when he returned and intimated his intention to rejoin his wife he found to his dismay that Capt. D'Oyley had made up his mind to occupy the vacant chair near Karminie and to leave him to come in for the whole of the scolding, which he felt sure was in store for him. Capt. D'Oyley stayed in Mr. Henry's box until the Opera concluded, when he went home with the Huntingdons to supper and was dropped at his boarding-house by Mr. Henry.

Signora Patellani and Mr. Huntingdon left Mrs. Ranford soon after the Colonel rejoined his wife, and Col. Ranford knew from his wife's black looks that unpleasantness would ensue when they got to their own rooms. The row was long and furious, and as stealthily as Capt. D'Oyley crept up the stairs, Mrs. Ranford's quick ears heard the sound of his footsteps.

"Will you come in here, Capt. D'Oyley," shouted Mrs. Ranford; "do not think that because you sneaked away and went to the Grange that I should lose sight of you or would go to bed before you returned."

"What is it you want of me?" asked Capt. D'Oyley.

"What did you mean by enticing my husband away into the box with Miss Granville," she replied indignantly.

Capt. D'Oyley smiled and gave no answer.

"Do you think that I,—a Colonel's wife——"

"Lieut.-Col.," interposed the Captain.

"How dare you, Capt. D'Oyley, correct me in that manner," burst forth Mrs. Ranford, stamping her foot upon the ground.

"You should be grateful to him for putting you right," said her husband; "there is nothing to make such a row about."

"Then I tell you, Col. Ranford."

"Lieut.-Col.," again chimed in Capt. D'Oyley provokingly.

"Keep quiet, Capt. D'Oyley," answered Mrs. Ranford furiously. "I say that I will no longer encourage your disgraceful conduct, and will take means to check its further progress."

"But you have nothing to do with D'Oyley; he can do as he likes," spoke the Colonel.

"I am not speaking to that man," said Mrs. Ranford, pointing to the Captain, "it is you that I am speaking to. Your most atrocious behaviour has been noticed by all who are living in this house. You tried to pass off as an unmarried man when I was in England and even tried to make love to Miss Pry, and you told the old lady that you had no wife."

"I never took sufficient interest in either Mrs. Pry or her daughter to inform them of any particulars concerning myself," he replied.

"You did say to Mrs. Pry that you were unmarried but I will not die to please you, and leave the way clear for you to marry that young lady at the Grange. Miss Granville indeed! You will never get to put Miss Granville into my place, the bold little minx."

Col. Ranford wisely kept quiet; it was a relief to him to find that she did not suspect his love for Lilian. Capt. D'Oyley glanced at him, and smiled. Mrs. Ranford's quick eye noticed it.

"Leave my room, Capt. D'Oyley, if you do not know how to behave yourself," she authoritatively commanded.

Capt. D'Oyley showed his whole row of white teeth this time, and made his exit, only too glad to get so favourable an opportunity, and the poor Colonel groaned in the agony of spirit, with his wife sitting opposite glaring and grunbling at him almost till dawn.

CHAPTER XIV.

*LANCASTER MAKES AN OFFER OF MARRIAGE
TO DAISY.*

ON the following Sunday Capt. D'Oyley, arrayed in his tennis dress and with bat in hand, knocked at Col. Ranford's room door. Mrs. Ranford heard it and came out in a furious passion and said: "What do you want Capt. D'Oyley; I thought you understood that I did not wish you to speak to me."

"I want to see Ranford."

"Why do you wish to see him? I hope you do not intend to persuade my husband to go out with you."

"I am off, Ranford," the Captain called out.

"Wait for me, D'Oyley," Col. Ranford replied, "I am also coming."

"I am also coming," re-echoed Mrs. Ranford. "Where are you going with this man?"

"We are going to the Grange for tennis," he answered.

"But you are not to go," she shrieked. "I will not allow you to go."

"Do not be ridiculous," he said. "Come along D'Oyley."

"Then I will go too," she exclaimed, planting herself before the drawing-room door to the no small amusement of the other boarders.

"But you are not invited," spoke the Colonel.

"I am; Mr. Huntingdon told me to come whenever I liked," she replied.

"Well! I am sure he will regret his invitation when he finds how disagreeable you make yourself, and I hope you are not coming in that rig, for your hair is quite tossed and you have nothing on your head."

"I shall wear my hat, but I will not let you get out of

my sight." Whereupon she called to Soondree Ayah to fetch her hat.

"Surely you are not going like that, my dear Mrs. Ranford," interposed Mrs. Waller. "There are many persons at the Grange on a Sunday ; it is only on that account that I do not go, because I should have to dress so nicely."

"And you must wear a tennis dress," added Col. Waller.

"I will wear just what I wish," Col. Waller, "and I am only going on account of my husband."

"A dutiful wife, eh !" remarked a lodger who was reclining on a sofa.

"Please mind your own business, Capt. Antiram," snapped Mrs. Ranford.

Capt. Antiram, C. V. R., thought himself better than any military officer, and far from relished the snub he got, so he stroked his mustache and treated the remark with contempt.

"You had better go into the room and arrange your dress," said Col. Ranford, walking away from the door and going into their little sitting room: Mrs. Ranford followed and adjusted her hat and dress. After this, they both got into the brougham, Capt. D'Oyley getting in also and taking the little front seat.

"You have not brought your bat with you, Mrs. Ranford ; shall I send for it ?" said the Captain.

"Do not speak to me, Capt. D'Oyley. I do not care to know you," replied Mrs. Ranford sharply.

And for the rest of the drive to the Grange the three occupants of the brougham stared at each other in silence. When they got out at their destination, Capt. D'Oyley amused Karminie by telling her what had occurred since they last met.

"And so it is, poor me ! that she is so jealous of," said Karminie. "I scarcely know the Colonel, but as I am credited with what I am innocent of, I will now tease her," saying which she went up to the Colonel, who was standing close to his wife, and bowing to Mrs. Ranford, she spoke to him, "If you have not secured a partner for the next

game, Col. Ranford, will you be mine; we are getting up a set?"

"I shall be delighted, Miss Karminie," answered the Colonel, following her and leaving Mrs. Ranford in a frenzy.

Capt. D'Oyley and Signora Patellani made up their set. The Colonel and the Captain were both excellent players, and after a hard tussle Col. Ranford won the set by one point. The game having concluded Karminie went with her partner to the refreshment tent where she had some tea and he, a whiskey and soda. They subsequently strolled about the grounds, while Signora and Capt. D'Oyley were flirting most audaciously in one of the summer houses. In the distance, near a knoll of cocoanut palms, were seated on a bench, Daisy and Lancaster.

"We must not intrude upon them," said the Colonel whose keen sight had already spied them.

"Do you know, Col. Ranford," remarked Karminie; "it strikes me that Mr. Lancaster is telling his secrets to Daisy."

"Perhaps he is asking her to decide an important question for him," he answered, and he was not far wrong: for after Daisy had played a couple of games at tennis Lancaster asked her to walk with him and finally placed her upon a bench which was far away from the tennis ground. He seated himself beside her.

Lancaster was by no means old; his age was about forty, but owing to his quiet and reserved manner he looked older.

"Daisy," he said speaking to her, "it must seem strange to you that an old fogey like myself should talk to you of love. You were a child when I left India. I then thought that I should never marry, for I was very unhappy and crushed in spirit, after the ill-fated accident I had and the sad news which came upon me; you might remember something of it."

"Yes, I have a faint recollection of it," she answered.

Mr. Lancaster proceeded: "I now feel my life so lonely and

the old associations have knit me so closely to the family that I am afraid I am going to venture to break my resolution, and try to win for myself a wife and dear girl." Taking her hand in his, he continued: "Will you help me to do this? I have already spoken to Mr. Huntingdon this morning and have his best wishes for my success."

He stopped short and Daisy wondered what he alluded to.

"Was it about Karminie that you spoke to Mr. Huntingdon?" she enquired in her matter-of-fact way; she felt puzzled and could not understand in what way she was to help Lancaster.

"Daisy," he exclaimed, "surely you do not misunderstand me. It is you whom I wish to marry; am I doomed to be disappointed again?"

"Oh! no," said Daisy, "I hope not; if you think that my life united with yours would make you happy I shall be glad to become your wife."

Mr. Lancaster felt contented, he drew Daisy to him and kissed her, and at that very moment Karminie happened to turn and see it, and some one at the same time rushed behind the bushes and disappeared: it was none else than Ram Ram, the son of Soondree Ayah.

"You naughty people," said Karminie, taking the Colonel with her and approaching the bench upon which Daisy and Lancaster were seated. "We saw you, I knew it would come to this. I told Lilian of my suspicions the very day I arrived, and you unprincipled people, you have been making love on the quiet all these days and keeping us in the dark, but now that I have discovered the treachery, I am off to apprise Lilian of it," she laughingly remarked.

"No, you must not. I beg of you not to say anything yet," said Daisy. "I shall tell Lilian myself later on in the evening."

So Col. Ranford and Karminie walked away and joined the other guests.

Mrs. Pry was seated next to Mrs. Ranford and was

talking to her; and Edith was very amiably paying attentions to Mr. Henry. Mrs. Pry knew that Mr. Henry was a rising civilian who might be getting into the Secretariat, so she instructed Edith to be very agreeable to him.

Mr. Appleton was conversing with Lilian and took no notice of Karminie; he only once observed:

"What a fearful flirt your cousin is, Miss Huntingdon; she has now thrown over Mr. Henry for the Colonel."

"He is a married man," replied Lilian; "it would be a dangerous game to play, to flirt with him."

"Young ladies never consider the danger they run, nor do they care whom they pain," he answered.

"Oh! Mr. Appleton," said Lilian, "I am surprised to find how very spiteful you are getting."

"I see you know Signora Patellani," he remarked; "she came out in the same steamer with us, a handsome woman, but I should not like to marry an Italian, for I could never trust her."

"I think Signora Patellani exceedingly nice," answered Lilian.

Further conversation was interrupted by Karminie and Col. Ranford coming up to them, and by Karminie's saying, "Lilian, you will hear some good news to-night."

"What is it?" asked Lilian. "Cannot you tell it to me now?"

"Perhaps Miss Granville has taken compassion on one of her many admirers," suggested Mr. Appleton, "and she feels too shy to tell us that we have a chance of eating wedding cake very shortly."

"It is a pity she has not chosen you, Mr. Appleton," replied Karminie with a mischievous look.

"I could not expect to be so fortunate," answered that gentleman with a low bow.

"I have promised Daisy not to tell the secret, Lilian," again rejoined Karminie, "but she will tell you if you ask her."

"That is as much as saying what the good news is," remarked the Colonel with a smile.

Just then there came a shriek from Mrs. Ranford and a

jump from the bench upon which she was seated ; and they all ran forward.

It seems Piggy had broken loose from her sty and had rushed in among the guests, and in doing so she had accidentally brushed against Mrs. Ranford, who in an ungovernable fit of temper kicked Piggy. The pig not being accustomed to such treatment resented the insult by turning round and nipping Mrs. Ranford on her ankle. • Mrs. Ranford was furious.

"I will go home at once," she said. "I have never yet heard of civilized persons being amongst pigs ; one would think you were in a pigsty instead of a gentleman's house."

Lilian excused the remark, knowing how excited Mrs. Ranford was.

"You naughty Piggy," she said, reprimanding the pig who still looked very indignant.

"I am so sorry the pig has behaved so badly," she added, going up to the enraged woman ; "I hope you are not much hurt."

"It's not being hurt," she replied (after all it was only a scratch) ; "it's the idea of having so obnoxious a brute near me."

"Poor little Piggy," said Karminie patting the pig, who jumped upon her quite delightedly.

"How did the accident happen ?" enquired the Colonel of his wife.

"The brute came against me and I kicked it," she answered.

"It's your own fault then," replied the Colonel. "She would not have harmed you had you not behaved in so unlady-like a manner."

Lilian ordered the pig to be taken away, and it was with difficulty that the servants succeeded in doing so, for the pig's shrieks, on being taken against her will, were heard all over the grounds, bringing all the guests to the spot. Mr. Huntingdon had gone into the house with Mr. Lancaster and was ignorant of what had occurred ; he did not know what to make of Piggy's wild shrieks. He

hurried to the place, and Daisy, who was left alone upon the bench when Lancaster went in with Huntingdon, now came too. When the Ranfords were going home Capt. D'Oyley asked the Colonel to send him his dress suit as he intended remaining at the Grange for dinner. Lieut. Sommerville and Major Newcombe also stayed, as they always did, and so did Mr. Henry, Mr. Appleton and Mr. Lancaster, who brought their dinner suits with them, as they had previously been invited. Lilian also invited Mrs. Pry and Edith to come back and dine with them. Signora, who came in early, did not fail to bring another dress with her, so she stayed on.

Lilian went into Daisy's room as soon as they had gone upstairs, and said: "Daisy, I am sure you have some good news for me, I see it in your face; are we to have bridesmaids' dresses, dear?"

"Yes," answered Daisy, "and you will have them very soon too. I am to be married some time next month."

"To whom, Daisy?" Lilian mischievously enquired, "you have not yet told me the gentleman's name. Is it Mr. Appleton?"

"No," answered Daisy indignantly. "Surely you must have guessed that it could be no other than Mr. Lancaster."

"I am indeed glad of the good news. I know Mr. Lancaster is worthy of you. Fancy Daisy my being engaged so long and your marrying first," said Lilian; "people say that long engagements seldom end in marriage."

"You must not talk like that, Lilian. I am sure you would be sorry if anything so unfortunate should occur as to break off your engagement with Lieut. Sommerville," replied Daisy, "and Mrs. Mowbray has set her heart upon her son's marrying you."

"I should be sorry to be an old maid," observed Lilian as she kissed Daisy and walked off to dress.

Lilian quickly dressed in order to be the first to apprise her father of the good news. In crossing the drawing-room she met Lieut. Sommerville: "I have such good news for you, Edward," she began. "Daisy is going to marry Lancaster."

"Indeed!" he answered. "I never suspected Lancaster had his thoughts that way. It has been an age since I kissed you darling," he said, suiting the action to the word. "I could not get away to-day earlier than I did. I lost the train and had to drive in. When are you coming to pay Rowdypore a visit, Lilian?"

"We shall go after Daisy's marriage; we are first going to Peepulpore for a short change," she replied. "Pa' says he wishes to visit the hot springs and wishes to take Karminie and myself."

"I am getting inclined to think, Lilian, that you are tiring of me and purposely avoid coming to a place where I am," he answered.

Lilian's conscience smote her and she said: "You must not say such unkind things, Edward, or I shall be quarrelling with you."

"What, quarrelling already," exclaimed Karminie, who had just entered the room with Signora Patellani.

"I am off to see Pa," said Lilian.

Leaving the room she passed through the green-room adjoining it, and going up to her father's room door she knocked at it and asked: "Pa' can I see you for five minutes?"

"Yes, certainly Lily," he answered, "I shall be out in a second."

Lilian waited in the room until Mr. Huntingdon appeared in his dress coat and white tie with a Marshal Neil bud in his button hole.

"Pa," she said, "are you aware of the good news? Has Mr. Lancaster told you that Daisy has consented to marry him?"

"Yes, he has told me."

"They are to be married next month," observed Lilian.

"I did not know it was to be so soon; we had better now make it public by drinking the health of the betrothed couple at dinner to-night, and we must give something in honor of it. What shall it be Lilian—a dinner, breakfast, or picnic?"

"I should suggest a ball, Pa', but let us ask Karminie," she said, calling to her cousin who, in answer, came into the room.

"Karminie," spoke her uncle, "what do you think we should give in honor of Daisy's engagement with Lancaster?"

"A ball by all means," said Karminie. "I long to have a jolly dance."

"That is just what I suggested," remarked Lilian.

"Very well," replied Mr. Huntingdon, "you shall have the ball. Dr. and Mrs. Mowbray are coming down before the closing of the Exhibition; we can fix the ball for the 15th and Mrs. Mowbray can play the part of hostess."

"I wish I was a married woman, uncle," said Karminie, "but it seems that poor me! is left utterly in the cold; every one except myself seems to get engaged."

"Do not despair so soon," remarked Mr. Henry, with a meaning look in his light blue eyes, as he came into the room and caught Karminie's last words. "Mr. (eh! I forget his name) seems in better spirits now," he smilingly said.

"Oh! Mr. Henry," exclaimed Karminie not altogether pleased at the allusion to Mr. Appleton.

Lilian understanding to whom Mr. Henry referred mischievously added: "I do not think he will have anything more to say to Karminie. I fancy he is taken up with Signora."

"It will be a bad look-out for uncle then," answered Karminie (a bit nettled and venting her ill-humour on poor Mr. Huntingdon), "although to a casual observer it looks as if he has intentions of cutting out Lieut. Somerville."

"He walked with me," replied Lilian, "but it was of Signora Patellani that he spoke; a poor compliment to me, but these are the ways of the world."

Mrs. Pry having come back for dinner the ladies re-entered the drawing-room. Mrs. Pry looked quite spruce in her black silk dress and white lace cap with red ribbons. Edith in a *crème* satin, worn somewhat in the style of the modern Lady Godiva, looked bent upon conquest, and partly succeeded, for Mr. Appleton again deserted his colors and transferred his attentions to the fascinating Edith, very

much to the mortification of her mother and to the amusement of Capt. D'Oyley, who was not slow to notice the angry look on the face of the old lady who was determined that her daughter should land the *topsey*, which though a small fish is worth a dozen larger ones.

Daisy gave the signal and they all rose to go down to dinner. The newly engaged couple were toasted in Heidsick's best Monopole, and Mr. Huntingdon said in proposing the health of Miss Richardson and Mr. Lancaster :

"It is a great pleasure to me, that a betrothal between my old friend and my sister-in-law should take place in my house. It is superfluous for me to ask my friends assembled here to join me in wishing them every happiness, for I know you all wish that. I have also to say before closing that my daughter and niece are desirous of celebrating this most auspicious event by a ball at the Grange, and I earnestly hope that nothing may occur to mar our happiness or prevent any of my friends here present from joining us in the coming festivities. The health and happiness of Miss Richardson and Mr. Lancaster."

Lifting their glasses they greeted the newly engaged couple. Mr. Henry then proposed the health of Mr. Huntingdon and that of the ladies.

CHAPTER XV.

LILIAN AND KARMINIE CALL TO SEE EDITH.

SOONDREE AYAH again betook herself to Mrs. Pry's residence. She came to say that Col. and Mrs. Ranford were going to live at Rowdypore, and that she and Ram Ram would be going with them. She also told Mrs. Pry that Ram Ram had seen the Colonel walking with Karminie on the previous day at the Grange. He hid behind the bushes and he heard them talking in low tones, and she said that Ram Ram would himself come to Mrs. Pry in future.

Edith, as usual, had placed herself behind the door, and had this time contrived to hear the whole of the conversation.

In the meanwhile, at the Grange, preparations were being made for the coming Ball and the approaching wedding. Mr. Huntingdon signified his intention to defray the cost, notwithstanding the protest put forward by Mr. Lancaster that he would share in the expense.

It was an understood thing that Lilian and Karminie would both be Daisy's bridesmaids, and Lilian suggested to also ask Edith to be a third.

This being arranged, Lilian and Karminie got into the pony trap and drove to Meddlesome Priory. They met Soondree Ayah under the portico and Karminie questioned who she was.

The woman did not answer, but glided away. Karminie, however, was determined to find out, so she asked Edith.

"Mrs. Ranford's Ayah; she frequently comes to see mamma: you had better ask her on what business she comes," said Edith in a meaning tone.

"Edith," said Lilian, "we have come to ask you if you would like to be one of Daisy's bridesmaids together with us."

"Indeed, I should be only too delighted," she replied, and she looked quite pleased at the prospect.

"You will have to go with us to be measured for your dress next week," spoke Karminie.

Mrs. Pry now came into the room and kissing the two girls affectionately, said : "What is it, my dears, that you are asking Edith to do ?"

"To be one of Daisy's bridesmaids," replied Lilian.

"How good of you to think of her, my love," said Mrs. Pry.

"Ma' is glad because she thinks I shall get a good dress, and she may not have to make me another for a long time," remarked Edith.

"In that case I should throw some red wine over it if I were you," suggested Karminie laughing.

"Oh ! please do not teach her those wicked things, Miss Granville," spoke Mrs. Pry, raising her hands, and she whiningly continued,— "She is so very wicked already and makes me spend such a lot of money on dress."

"Considering I have scarcely a decent dress to wear, and people see me in the same Ball dress half a dozen times, I fancy the bank instead of the dress-maker has all the money," she answered, and turning to Lilian she asked her when the Ball at the Grange was coming off.

"We have fixed upon the 15th," was the answer.

"Do please then ask Ma' whether she is going to make me a new dress or intends to take me in the old rags ?"

"Do not tell stories, my dear ; you have lots of nice dresses," retorted Mrs. Pry.

"I am sure your Ma' will order you a nice dress, for it is to her own advantage ; uncle says he intends to have the Ball on a grand scale," said Karminie.

"Who is Mr. Appleton, my love," enquired Mrs. Pry.

"Mr. Appleton," said Karminie, "is the grandson of the great Sir Henry Appleton, who distinguished himself in the battle of Waterloo. He is examiner of accounts to the Government of India and is drawing a handsome salary ; he is

a great catch, Mrs. Pry. I only wish he would take a fancy to me instead of going after Edith," at whom she cast a mischievous glance.

Mrs. Pry's eyes sparkled. "Not so bad after all," she thought, and then said aloud,—“But he is not a covenanted man?”

“What does that matter,” replied Karminie; “any man can get into the Civil Service if he studies for it and passes his examination. I prefer a wealthy uncovenanted man to one who is only Assistant or Joint Magistrate like my poor father was or Mr. Henry is.”

Mrs. Pry again reflected, and this time said: “I will give you a new dress for the Ball, Edith.”

The girls having gained their point rose to go home, but before leaving, Karminie said to Mrs. Pry: “What does Mrs. Ranford's Ayah want here?”

Mrs. Pry hesitated and then replied: “She came to say that her mistress and the Colonel were soon going to live at Rowdypore and Mrs. Ranford had sent her to convey her *salaams*.”

“Is that all,” said Karminie so scrutinizingly that Mrs. Pry changed colour. Edith quickly glanced at her mother and then at Karminie who wore an incredulous smile. Then the girls left.

“Mrs. Pry changed colour when I asked why Mrs. Ranford's Ayah goes over,” observed Karminie to Lilian. “I must try and find it out from Edith. I am sure that there is some mischief brewing. It looks very curious.”

“I wonder what it can be,” answered Lilian.

When the girls returned to the Grange they found Col. Ranford awaiting them and conversing with Daisy in the drawing-room.

“Is Pa' not at home?” asked Lilian, shaking hands with the Colonel.

“No, he went out immediately after you left and has not come back yet,” replied Daisy.

“I hear you are going back to live at Rowdypore, Colonel,” said Karminie.

"Yes, she (meaning his wife) is determined to go," he answered.

"We wanted to ask you to remain to dinner yesterday, but Mrs. Ranford seemed in such a hurry to get away that Pa' thought it useless to invite you," said Lilian.

"Oh! she would never have stayed after the fuss she made about that scratch Piggy gave her," replied the Colonel. "I came to say we were leaving to-morrow or next day."

"We saw Mrs. Ranford's Ayah at Mrs. Pry's house to-day," spoke Karminie, "perhaps I ought not to mention it, as I do not think either Mrs. Pry or Mrs. Ranford would like it known."

"I wonder what she went for," said the Colonel. "D'Oyley goes with us for a day or two."

The girls tried to persuade Col. Ranford to stay for five o'clock tea, but he excused himself on the plea of having an engagement.

"Remember me please to Mr. Huntingdon," he said as he rose to go.

"We are to have a Ball on the 15th in honor of Daisy's engagement; now promise me that you will come, Col. Ranford," said Karminie.

"I shall try my best," he answered.

"Oh! you must come, Colonel," added Lilian, pressing his hand as he gave it in saying goodby.

"I will come," he replied, and left the room.

CHAPTER XVI.

COLONEL AND MRS. RANFORD AT ROWDYPORE.

OVER five hundred invitations were issued for the coming Ball, and some of the guests asked Lillian to give them blank cards to fill in for their friends.

By the morning's post the Ranfords received their invitation and one for Capt. D'Oyley. Col. Ranford was seated in the vestibule reading the newspapers when the letters arrived; he opened the large square envelope addressed to his wife and himself and read aloud:

"Mr. and Miss Huntingdon request the pleasure of Col. and Mrs. Ranford's company to a Ball at the Grange on the 15th instant at 9 o'clock.

THE GRANGE, BALLYGUNGE, *March—188—.*"

"Humph," grunted Mrs. Ranford, "what is the Ball being given for?"

"To celebrate the betrothal of Miss Richardson to Mr. Lancaster," answered the Colonel.

"It's a pity that it's not Mr. Huntingdon's niece's engagement instead; he ought to get her settled instead of allowing her to run after an old fool like you."

"Perhaps Miss Granville prefers an old fool to a young one," he answered laughing, and called out: "D'Oyley, here is an invitation for you."

The Captain came out and took the letter from the Colonel.

"I will not go to the Ball," said Mrs. Ranford. "I will write an excuse and you shall not go either," she added addressing her husband.

"I have promised to go and I will," was his reply.

"If I refuse the invitation you cannot go. Mr. Huntingdon will think it strange for you to do so," argued Mrs. Ranford.

"I can explain to him that you did not come because you are jealous of Miss Granville for being young and pretty."

"Jealous of Miss Granville," replied Mrs. Ranford, indignantly repeating the Colonel's words. "It's your folly that prevents my going; I do not like to be disgraced."

The Colonel laughed.

"Are you going to the Ball, Mrs. Ranford," asked Capt. D'Oyley.

"It's no concern of yours, Capt. D'Oyley, whether I am going or not," replied Mrs. Ranford.

"She is not going D'Oyley, but I am," spoke the Colonel.

"Please do not flatter yourself that you are going without me," said Mrs. Ranford, speaking to her husband. "If you are determined to make a fool of yourself by going then I will go too."

"What! after refusing the invitation and also making a fool of yourself," replied Col. Ranford.

"I will accept the invitation and I will go if you do," she answered rising to go to her desk and write her answer.

After finishing the note she brought it open to the Colonel and held it up for him to read:

"Col. and Mrs. Ranford beg to thank Mr. and Miss Huntingdon for their invitation for the 15th instant and accept it with pleasure."

"Ha, ha!" she laughed, "that has foiled your intentions, Col. Ranford. I shall order a new dress for the occasion."

"And see if you cannot put Miss Granville into the shade," edged in the Captain.

"I have repeatedly requested you, Capt. D'Oyley, not to speak to me," said Mrs. Ranford; "you may be my husband's guest which compels me to be in the same house with you, but I am not obliged to know you."

D'Oyley looked at Ranford, who smiled and passed him the papers.

Although this was a holiday Col. Ranford and Capt. D'Oyley had made up their minds to run up to town unknown to Mrs. Ranford. Hurrying over their breakfast the Colonel sent for a ticca gharry.

"I wonder where they are going," soliloquised Mrs. Ranford, who came to the window in time to see the carriage drive off; but Soondree Ayah was sharper than her mistress, for when she heard the order given for the carriage she ordered Ram Ram to hold himself in readiness, and giving him a rupee for expenses, she put him at the back of the gharry. When Ranford and D'Oyley alighted from the carriage and proceeded to purchase their tickets at the Railway Station Ram Ram followed suit and tried to slip into the train unobserved. Capt. D'Oyley, however, took note of the urchin and mentioned his suspicion to Col. Ranford that he thought they were being followed.

"Followed by whom," said the Colonel. "Nonsense D'Oyley, you are getting imaginative."

But the Captain once having taken up this idea he could not so readily divest himself of it. On arriving at Sealdah Station they got into a gharry and drove to town, followed by Ram Ram in another carriage; they went to some of the shops and then returned by the evening train. Ram Ram dismissed his gharry and followed them on foot; keeping the gharry in sight by walking fast and even running at times, he returned with them by the evening train.

Soondree Ayah told Mrs. Ranford that she had sent Ram Ram to follow the Colonel and the Captain and she promised to tell her the result, which she did.

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. HENRY MAKES KARMINIE AN OFFER OF MARRIAGE.

MR. Huntingdon had gone to the Club to dine with Mr. Henry on Monday evening, so the girls were left quite by themselves at the Grange. They were so tired after their two days' dissipation that they readily accepted the suggestion made by Daisy that they should retire directly after dinner was over.

On the following afternoon Mr. Henry took the two girls with him to the Exhibition, and returning home with them spent the remainder of the evening at the Grange. Lilian and Karminie, after coming home, changed their dresses and came into the verandah where Mr. Henry was regaling himself with a glass of sherry and lemonade. He never took strong drinks and did not smoke. He rose and offered them seats, at the same time pouring out some wine.

"Please do not help me to any," said Lilian, "I am not partial to sherry, and I wish to have a talk with Pa', so I shall leave Karminie to entertain you."

"Mr. Huntingdon has just left me," remarked Mr. Henry. "I fancy he will be back directly."

"Then I shall be in time to catch him before he returns," she replied with a smile, making Karminie feel very uncomfortable with her designing mischievousness.

Karminie looked exceedingly pretty in a black silk dress with Spanish lace and natural pink roses fastened to her bodice. Mr. Henry sat admiring her for some seconds before he made up his mind to say anything. The colour on Karminie's face came and went as she felt his quiet gaze fixed upon her.

"Come and sit beside me on this sofa," he said, and taking her hand he raised her from the chair upon which she was seated and placed her near him.

"Has any one else ever taken your hand in his, Karminie, he asked.

"Except to shake hands with, no one has done so lately," she answered.

"Would you like to go home with me ; I shall soon be going home on furlough."

Karminie smiled and looked down.

"No answer, dear girl," he said.

"How can I go home with an unmarried man and alone ? My uncle will never permit it," she said, intentionally misunderstanding him.

"Yes, he will, for then I shall be a married man," he answered.

Karminie blushed and made no reply.

"May I speak to your uncle to-night and say that you are only waiting for his consent to become my wife ?" he asked.

"Not to-night," urged Karminie ; "give me a few days to think over what you have said ; you scarcely know me and this may only be an impulse."

"Why not consent now ? I will not change my mind," he said, putting his arm round her and drawing her closer to him. "Karminie, how sweet it is to love ; do you remember saying that you would like to be a married woman, and why are you now hesitating ?"

Karminie remembered only too well, yet now that there was a chance for her to get married she did not seem to be eager to grasp it. It was not that she did not care for Mr. Henry, but it all came upon her so unexpectedly that she was unprepared as to what to say. Mr. Henry was attracted by Karminie the first day he saw her, and resolved on making her acquaintance. Fortune favored him by giving him the empty seat on the bench beside her at the Exhibition, and being a Civil Servant and of good family Mr. Huntingdon admitted him to the Grange as a guest. Mr. Henry had calmly considered the matter and had come to the conclusion that in Karminie there was all that even the most fastidious of men

could wish to have in a wife; and he persuaded himself to believe that he was in love with her. The fancy daily grew stronger upon him, till at length he asked her to be his wife. Karminie's beauty was very fascinating; hers was a rare type of loveliness. Her rich golden hair and great dark eyes had an irresistible attraction for him. Mr. Henry was very susceptible to beauty. Besides, he knew that she was a gentlewoman by birth.

Karminie, from her father's side, was the great granddaughter of an Earl, but with the exception of the little money she expected to inherit from old Mrs. Huntingdon, Karminie was portionless; all that her father received from his grandfather was his education, but not a shilling of his money did the old Earl leave him, for his daughter married Karminie's grandfather without his consent; it was a run-away match, and he never forgave her. The old man, after the death of his daughter and her husband, took the boy and educated him for the Indian Civil Service, and he came to India as Sub-Divisional Officer of Moorshedabad with his young wife, Mr. Huntingdon's only sister, and soon after, he died of typhoid fever.

"You will not refuse me, Karminie," Mr. Henry continued. "I shall speak to your uncle to-night."

Karminie made no reply and left it to Mr. Henry to do as he thought best, so after dinner was over and the ladies had retired to the drawing-room Mr. Henry addressed Mr. Huntingdon while they were sitting over their wine.

"Mr. Huntingdon, I have asked your niece to become my wife, and as a matter of form she has referred me to you, but at the same time she does not as yet wish the engagement to be made public."

"What a very strange thing it is," said Mr. Huntingdon, "that during this week two engagements should take place in my family. If Karminie has consented to marry you of course I shall be very glad to do all in my power to promote her happiness. I must say though that an engagement seems rather premature, and perhaps it would be better for both parties to have a little time for consideration."

"That is just what Miss Granville has been saying. She has asked for a few days' time before deciding. I think it a very reasonable request, and although I shall be anxious until I receive a definite answer, I feel assured, Mr. Huntingdon, that you will not withhold your consent if Miss Granville accepts me."

"Certainly not, Mr. Henry, you have my word for it," said Mr. Huntingdon holding out his hand.

"Thank you," he replied, accepting the hand and shaking it heartily.

"I must also add that Karminie has no money," spoke Mr. Huntingdon. "Her grandmother who is my mother will, I daresay, make a small settlement upon her. My fortune has all been willed to my daughter Lilian. I had no option in the matter, as the property comes from my grandfather, according to whose will it descends to only the children from the male branch, but in case of Lilian's dying without issue Karminie will be next-of-kin."

"I should indeed be very sorry to learn that anything so sad had occurred as the death of Miss Huntingdon," replied Mr. Henry.

"It would be a very severe blow to me. Lilian is my only child," said Mr. Huntingdon.

The two gentlemen rose from the table and joined the ladies in the drawing-room, where they found Mr. Lancaster, who came in after dinner and went upstairs at once. Karminie knew from her uncle's glance at her that Mr. Henry had already spoken to him.

After the gentlemen left Mr. Huntingdon came up to Karminie saying, "I have to give you a lecture, Karminie. Will you come into the verandah with me? Your conduct to Mr. Appleton has been very unkind, and I regret you should compel me to speak to you about it."

"To speak to me of Mr. Appleton," replied Karminie. "How dare he say anything disparagingly of me."

Lilian looked at her father, and even Daisy was surprised at what he said.

Karminie walked into the verandah with her uncle, who placed her in a chair and drew another near her, seating himself in it.

"Karminie, Mr. Henry tells me that you referred him to me for my consent in the event of your accepting him. He also says that you have asked for a few days' time to consider his offer. I have given him my word not to withhold my consent should you accept him, although I think the offer premature. Mr. Henry is a gentleman and is worthy of you. I have also told him of everything that concerns you, and I have said that it is probable your grandmother will make a small settlement upon you, but that otherwise you will have no fortune. Out of my savings I shall give you as a marriage portion ten thousand rupees, and of course defray all your wedding expenses. I have not mentioned a word of this to Mr. Henry, and I must also ask you not to speak about it, as the money I shall give you will be entirely your own to do with as you like, for Mr. Henry's income at present cannot be more than seven hundred rupees a month, and if you are going to Europe you will require more pin money than he could allow you out of his small salary."

"It is indeed generous of you, uncle," answered Karminie, putting her arms round Mr. Huntingdon's neck, and kissing him; "and what about Mr. Appleton uncle?"

"I only said that as a blind, as I did not know whether you would like Lilian and Daisy to know yet awhile of Mr. Henry's offer, and I know how inquisitive ladies are," spoke Mr. Huntingdon.

"I shall tell Lilian," she answered, "but I will not tell Daisy yet, for she may repeat it to Mr. Lancaster."

"It would not be nice for the news to go abroad before the engagement takes place. Do you think there is a chance of your accepting him, Karminie?" asked her uncle.

"I shall tell you to-morrow, uncle," Karminie answered, and wished him good-night.

On returning to the drawing-room Lilian said: "I hope your scolding was not very severe, Karminie."

"It was not as severe as I thought it would be?" she replied, "and I shall give Mr. Appleton a snubbing the next time he comes over."

Daisy and Lilian said good-night to Mr. Huntingdon and retired.

When they had gone to the sleeping apartments of the house, Karminie went to Lilian's room and told her of Mr. Henry's offer.

"I thought he would ask you," said Lilian.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BALL.

THIS was the night of the Ball. It was only on the morning of this eventful day that the Chinese carpenters, Italian decorators and native workmen had completed their decorative transformations; and very fairy-like was the result of their combined labours! Nature herself played tributary to Mr. Huntingdon's hospitable intentions, and added to the other attractions the rapturous beauty of a starlit night.

In the subdued light the bushy tropical trees contrasted pleasingly with the phosphoric brightness of the beautiful fireflies clustering on their leaves. Once within sight of the Grange, however, and all these sights were lost in a blaze of gaslight. Over the gateway flamed a gaslit WELCOME. Away in the distance, the fruit and forest trees shimmered with thousands of pendant Chinese lamps. Not far from the house the Mammoth pavilion, adorned with garlands of flowers and decorated with flags and Chinese lanterns, breathed forth welcome and bespoke the good cheer and supper that awaited the midnight votaries of Terpsichore. The rich velvety lawn descending to the margin of the lake showed to advantage in the gas light; while the lake itself reflected the splendour of the surrounding brightness.

Not less beautiful was the interior of the Grange. The drawing-room was specially attractive. Its beautifully distempered walls were covered with pale China silk overspread with artistically arranged wreaths of flowers, and looped here and there with silver cord holding bouquets and festoons of flowers. The ceiling was frescoed with Mythological groups, while the upper end of the hall displayed a floral WELCOME encircled by an

evergreen wreath picked out with roses. The green-room maintained its name with its decorations of ferns, mosses, palms and ivy leaves. A floor cloth, lightly stretched, covered the floor of the two dancing halls which had previously been polished with sperm and French chalk. The portico room and the verandah were embellished with flags and arranged with carpets, sofas and chairs.

And now for the ladies' dresses. Lilian and Karminie were both in white tulle, bespangled with dew drops ; they wore diamonds in their hair and on their arms and necks, and even Mrs. Pry kept her promise by giving Edith a new dress. She wore a rich yellow satin with black Spanish lace and deep red and yellow roses. Edith looked remarkably well. Signora Patellani was in a black satin, and Mrs. Steins, with whom Lilian stayed at Barrackpore, came with her husband and was dressed in pink net with pink roses. We must not forget to mention Mrs. Ranford's new dress ordered for the occasion. She appeared in a crème satin adorned with wreaths of pearls, a very pretty costume, but far too juvenile, and on her neck and hair she wore strings of real pearls. Alas for the figure which this dress was intended to adorn ! The one was so unsuited to the other that, when Mrs. Ranford entered the Ball-room, she became the laughing stock of the people, and even Mrs. Mowbray, who had arrived with the Doctor a few days back, could scarcely repress a smile.

Mrs. Ranford noticed the guests tittering and asked her husband : " What are those fools laughing at ? "

" At you, I suppose," answered the Colonel. " You look such a Guy in that dress."

" How dare you insult me, Col. Ranford," she exclaimed. " I will leave the room immediately. I have never before been in the company of such ill-bred people."

" Do not make yourself look so ridiculous ; the wisest thing for you to do is to take no notice of their remarks."

Mrs. Ranford took the advice of her husband, she sniffed the air and looked at every one, who passed by her, with a contemptuous smile, and she walked to the sitting-room

and sat down. Capt. D'Oyley, who came with the Ranfords, stood near her.

Mr. Huntingdon guessed there was something amiss, so he came up, and bowing to Mrs. Ranford said : "If you are not engaged to Capt. D'Oyley for the next dance, which is the Lancers, will you accept me as a partner?" He opened his programme to write down her name.

"I shall have much pleasure in dancing the Lancers with you, Mr. Huntingdon. Please do not think that I should so disgrace myself as to dance with Capt. D'Oyley," she replied.

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Huntingdon. "I really meant no offence."

The bandsmen, who were placed on the *Chabootra* in order to mellow by distance the music of the brass instruments, now struck up the Lancers, and Mr. Huntingdon led his partner to the dancing hall. This was followed by a Waltz, in which Col. Ranford danced with Lilian, and Capt. D'Oyley with Edith.

The rooms were fast filling and the dances were following each other at short intervals. Lilian danced with every one alike, showing no partiality. Her first dance was with Lieut. Sommerville, the second with Sir Laurence Howatson (Commissioner of Dustypore), and the third with the Colonel. The last named asked her to allow him to take her down to supper, and to this she consented.

Every one seemed to enjoy the Ball. Edith, who was a pretty dancer, had many partners, and Mrs. Pry looked quite pleased at her daughter's success.

She manœuvred and at last secured a seat near Mrs. Ranford.

"Don't you think Edith is looking very nice?" she asked.

"Who is Edith?" enquired Mrs. Ranford snappishly.

"My daughter," said Mrs. Pry. "I thought you knew her."

"Yes, of course she looks pretty well to-night. I hear Mr. Appleton is attracted by her; she had better be careful not to let him slip through her fingers," answered the dame in the juvenile dress.

"She ought to do better than that among so many Civilians and Officers. My Edith is a pretty girl, and besides she is worth money."

"I should take what I could get," remarked Mrs. Ranford spitefully.

Mr. Huntingdon now came up with Dr. Chizzlebee, whom he had managed to persuade to ask Mrs. Ranford to dance. Dr. Chizzlebee was not in Government employ. He had just come to India and was practising on his own account; it was his object to make friends, so he asked Mrs. Ranford to honor him with a Waltz. The Doctor was a heavy-looking man with great red mustaches and a florid complexion. He gave Mrs. Ranford his arm and the two were seen whirling along in the Ball-room, but such harmony was not to be of long duration; for the room was crowded with waltzers, and the Doctor, with his partner bumped against one couple and then against another, and ultimately losing his balance on the slippery floor he came down with his fair partner in his arms. The ladies shrieked, and the gentlemen ran forward to render assistance to the unfortunate couple, but this only helped to increase Mrs. Ranford's indignation. Raising herself from the ground, and refusing the arm proffered by Sir Laurence, she turned to the confused and blushing medical man and said that he ought to learn to dance before coming to a Ball and making himself look so conspicuous. She then strutted out of the dancing-room leaving the poor Doctor quite ashamed of himself.

Sir Laurence stood twisting the ends of his long mustaches and looked 'puzzled, when Karminie and her partner Mr. Capers (a little man with a bald pate, light blue eyes and a nasal voice) hurried up to the spot, and so did Mr. Noodle, who was dancing with Mrs. Steins.

It was a relief to every one when the band struck up the old tune for supper, "The Roast Beef of Old England." Col. Ranford came to claim the promise given by Lilian and escorted her down. Mr. Appleton, who was in conversation with his would-be mother-in-law, offered her his arm, while Dr. Chizzlebee, looking quite crest-fallen, escorted

Edith. Sir Laurence had Mrs. Mowbray on his arm, and the remainder of the guests followed with their respective partners: Capt. D'Oyley led Karminie, Mr. Lancaster Mrs. Ranford, Daisy went down with Mr. Noodle, and Signora Patellani with Mr. Capers, who nearly lost his head under the intoxicating influence of her beauty.

The supper tables were crowded with the guests, who seemed to thoroughly appreciate the repast. Karminie and Capt. D'Oyley having finished their supper went for a stroll, and they had not gone far when the Captain noticed a figure stealthily following them and gliding behind the bushes. It was no other than Ram Ram, the Hindoo boy. Capt. D'Oyley immediately went to see who it could be, but the lad, perceiving this, took to his heels, the Captain running after him. The lad, however, was too fleet of foot for the Captain, more especially after a heavy supper, and so he escaped.

When he returned, Karminie said: "I have twice noticed that there has been some one behind the bushes. On Sunday when I was walking with Col. Ranford I heard a footstep near us, and on looking round I saw some one running away. I also saw Mrs. Ranford's Ayah at Mrs. Pry's house when Lilian and myself went there some days ago, and I believe that has something to do with it."

"There is, I suspect, some deep game being played by Mrs. Ranford and Mrs. Pry. I only wish I could find out what it is," replied the Captain.

Capt. D'Oyley being in uniform was mistaken for the Colonel by Ram Ram, and seeing that gentleman with Karminie he made sure it could be no other than Col. Ranford. The guests were now returning to the Ball-room and the music had struck up.

"Lilian," said the Colonel, as he gave her his arm to lead her upstairs, "how very hard this is for both of us."

"Yes, Edward," she answered. "It is very hard, indeed, to smile when the heart aches."

The bandsmen, fortified with a good supper and generous wine, were playing with renewed energy, and the

guests were at the highest pitch of enjoyment. While all this pleasure was taking place Piggy made her appearance on the scene. She had been wondering from the commencement of the evening what all these illuminations meant, and being a respected and intelligent member of the inquisitive sex she was very anxious to come out and have a close and personal inspection of the gala proceedings. Her first step was to break through her sty, and this she succeeded in doing just about the time that supper was over. She made her toilet and rendered herself presentable by shaking the mud off her body; then away to the trees and the various places of interest. The delights of the eye were soon forgotten in the delicious savours which invaded Miss Piggy's nostrils. Lifting her head and sniffing the air she soon discovered whence these tempting odours were coming. She made her way to one of the big tents where a large table was still laden with the remnants of the supper. Piggy mounted a light American chair in order to make a nearer acquaintance with the tempting viands, but she was disappointed, for down came the chair with its weighty occupant. In no way discomfited, but on the contrary determined to profit by her recent experience, she walked on, examining each chair, until she came to the head of the table where there was a substantial chair with arms. Piggy tried this one with success. She placed her front hoofs on the table and partook of all the dainties within her reach. Her next step was to mount the table and rove at will among the crockery, gorging herself to her heart's content. She soiled the white linen Damask cloth. Broken champagne glasses and broken pieces of the dessert service bore witness to her depredations. Other tables were equally patronised, their dainties demolished and their ornaments destroyed. Thence she proceeded to the house. Her ambition led her to the grand staircase, but seeing too many servants standing about, she turned her steps and went to the back-stairs which led to the portico room, and walked up leisurely. The first person whom she encountered was Capt. D'Oyley who was standing near the door and who smiled as he saw

Piggy making her way towards him. Miss Piggy rather welcomed the sight of an old friend who, in company with her mistress, often visited her at the sty; and, although Piggy had never before seen the Captain in his uniform, she still recognized a familiar face, and wagging her stump of a tail gave him a grunt, as much as to say how d'y'e do—please find me a comfortable nook. The Captain quite understood what Piggy meant. He secreted her behind the chairs and the heavy decorations until he succeeded unobserved in finding her a place behind a sofa which was occupied by the matronly figures of Mrs. Ranford and Mrs. Waller, whose ample satin dresses would do well to screen Piggy's bulky figure from the gaze of inquisitive persons. Capt. D'Oyley concluded that neither of these ladies would dance again for the rest of the evening, and thought it the best place he could select for Piggy to remain in unnoticed. He went and told Karminie of what he had done and begged of her not to reveal the secret.

"I shall come and watch the fun," said Karminie, "after I have danced the next waltz for which I am already engaged to Mr. Henry."

Piggy, in the meanwhile, had made herself quite comfortable, and the sofa being placed in the corner of the room it gave her sufficient space to lie down. Piggy was not long in so enviable a position before she fell asleep, for, what with the nice supper, the hard work she had in breaking through her sty, and the exercise on the grounds, she was quite tired out. Mrs. Ranford and Mrs. Waller were engaged in conversation with Sir Laurence at the time that Piggy lay down behind their sofa, and the band being in full play any little disturbance Piggy may have caused in settling herself escaped unnoticed. Karminie having finished dancing came into the room and took the vacant chair next to Capt. D'Oyley in anticipation of amusement being caused through Piggy's, or rather the Captain's, naughtiness. Her anticipations were soon realized, for Piggy having fallen into a heavy sleep began to snore louder and louder, until at last Mrs. Waller wondered

from where the sounds came. The band stopped playing for the dancers to take rest and now the snoring could be distinctly heard. Mrs. Waller looked around the room and saw the people chatting and laughing gaily, and yet the sounds continued. Where could they be coming from, thought she. In her perplexity she turned to her friend Mrs. Ranford. That dame remarked that she too had noticed it and thought it very strange. At her suggestion they looked behind the sofa, where they beheld the culprit lying at full length and snoring vehemently.

"It is that horrid pig again," shrieked Mrs. Ranford. "What does Mr. Huntingdon mean by so insulting me as to let this creature sleep behind my couch; and I am sure it is no one else than Capt. D'Oyley who has brought her and placed her here."

"Do compose yourself, my dear Mrs. Ranford," said Mrs. Waller. "I am sure Mr. Huntingdon knows nothing about the pig coming here, and Capt. D'Oyley could not possibly have brought her; she must have come by herself."

"I will go into the verandah," spoke Mrs. Ranford. "I am not going to be the laughing stock of the people by sitting on a sofa which has a pig lying at the back."

"I should not disturb her," said Sir Laurence. "If she is allowed to remain unmolested no one will notice it; she cannot harm you, Mrs. Ranford."

"But I am not going to make a fool of myself by sitting here any longer. Mrs. Waller and you may enjoy the company of the pig, if you think it so enviable," saying which Mrs. Ranford walked out of the room, and going across the dancing saloon went into the verandah.

"Shall I go and tell Lilian about Piggy," asked Karminie of the Captain.

"I should just let it be as it is," he answered.

Edith had nearly succeeded in making a conquest of Mr. Appleton, and Mrs. Pry was in consequence quite charmed with him. He paid the old lady so much attention that she thought him quite a model man; he promised to call at "Meddlesome Priory," and as a reward Mrs. Pry

squeezed his hand which made that gentleman think that perhaps Mrs. Pry had mistaken his attentions; and knowing her to be a widow he became almost as nervous as the elder Weller. At this juncture Edith came up to her mother leaning on the arm of Mr. Noodle, which annoyed the old lady very much, for her mother's injunctions to her were to avoid Mr. Noodle and to set her cap at Mr. Appleton. Her vexation was apparent in the tones of her voice when she asked Mr. Appleton to give the order for her carriage; and indeed it was about time to go home, for the hand of the clock pointed to the hour of ~~four~~ ^{five}. Some of the guests hearing Mrs. Pry's command also gave orders for their carriages; and in another half hour's time the Grange was deserted by all its visitors.

Lilian and Karminie were exhausted; they had danced nearly every dance, and it was for many a long day afterwards that Edith remembered that enjoyable evening. Signora had quite gained Mr. Capers' affections; for if that gentleman had only seen his way to marrying, Signora would not have gone home without hearing his declaration of love, but as it was, poor Mr. Capers had to leave the unburdening of his bosom to some future day. Mr. Henry, Major Newcombe and Lieut. Sommerville were the last persons to leave. Mr. Henry took Karminie aside to say a few pretty words to her before going home, for Karminie had accepted his offer, and they were now *pucca* engaged, although at Karminie's request Mr. Huntingdon had not made the engagement public, and it was only known to the house folks. She had asked him not to do so, until after Daisy's wedding. The three gentlemen took their departure, leaving the good people of the house to retire and secure as much rest as they could.

In the meanwhile Piggy slept soundly on. She continued to do so until the sun rose, and when the servants came upstairs to settle the rooms, they found her walking about in the large front hall in which the people had been dancing the previous night. Piggy, after sleeping soundly, arose perfectly refreshed, and gratified her curiosity by visiting the halls and admiring herself in the mirrors. It was

here that the servants found her when they came to do their work, and thence she was forcibly taken back to her sty, which was quite broken and had to be repaired. Great was the consternation of the poor housekeeper when she was told by the old *Khansamah* of the damage that had been done to the dessert service and of the breakage of the glassware. There were sandwiches, cakes and *fondants* strewn about the ground, and it was none other than Miss Piggy who had done all this mischief. The servants, knowing that the dogs were tied up, and that the place was too bright and merry for jackals to approach, left the tables as they were after supper to smoke their *hookahs*, and it was during their temporary absence that Piggy had regaled herself with supper and damaged the crockery. After breakfast the housekeeper, with a distressed look, asked to see Mr. Huntingdon.

"I am sorry, Mr. Huntingdon," she began, "to be obliged to tell you of the mischief Piggy has done; she broke loose from her sty last night after supper was over and got to the tables, eating the viands and breaking the champagne glasses and pieces of your beautiful dessert service; the servants at the time had gone to smoke, never suspecting anything would happen during the interval that they were away."

"I am really sorry for the dessert service," replied Mr. Huntingdon, "for I am afraid I shall not be able to match the pieces in India. The service is of Venetian glass, and I brought it out with me when I came from Europe. I know Piggy has been very naughty; she came upstairs last night, and slept behind the sofa upon which Mrs. Waller and Mrs. Ranford were seated, and this morning the servants found her before the mirrors admiring herself when they came up to settle the rooms."

The housekeeper smiled at the thought of Piggy's impudence in ruffling Mrs. Ranford's temper, for the girls had mentioned to her that Sunday evening's occurrence in which Piggy and Mrs. Ranford were the principal actors.

Mrs. Jennings had been housekeeper at the Grange ever since Mr. Huntingdon had returned to India with Lilian; she was quiet and ladylike; her husband had been an Indigo

planter, who afterwards failed and died insolvent; she was an elderly person at this time and took great interest in both the girls. Lilian and Karminie often spent an hour in Mrs. Jennings' room, and now and again had tea with her. Mr. Huntingdon always invited her upstairs whenever there were any entertainments. The whole management of the house and of the servants was in her hands. She was now truly grieved for the damage done by Piggy, for Mrs. Jennings was very kind to the pig; she always gave her fruit and other delicacies; she was sorry to find that Piggy had behaved so greedily.

"If Piggy is going to be so naughty," continued Mr. Huntingdon, "we shall be obliged to chain her up. Lilian is so fond of the pig that I should not like to suggest anything which might in any way hurt her feelings."

"If you had the sty fenced in with iron railings instead of bamboos I do not think she could get out," spoke Mrs. Jennings.

"It is a capital idea," replied Mr. Huntingdon. "I shall see what Lilian has got to say to it."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PAPERCHASE MEET.

IT was the morning of the last paperchase but one of the season. The weather was propitious, the day being fine and clear—a day that was sure to bring a goodly gathering of spectators to enjoy the exciting and popular Ballygunge Chase. The light rain that had fallen during the previous night had made the ground in perfect going condition, and a close finish was generally expected.

Mr. Huntingdon drove Lilian and Karminie to the meet, where their horses were awaiting them. The girls were both attired in dark riding habits—Lilian in blue and Karminie in green. After the usual friendly greetings had been exchanged they mounted, and the spectators, who knew Lilian's powers as a horsewoman, were of opinion that the other ladies competing stood but a poor chance of victory. A pretty girl such as Lilian, mounted on a perfect Arab, was of course the cynosure of all eyes, and numerous were the wishes for her success.

The competitors turned out in strong force and among them were :—

Major Newcombe	...	on	<i>Moonshine.</i>
Mr. Cairn	...	"	<i>Snowflake.</i>
„ Noodle	...	"	<i>His Grey.</i>
Capt. D'Oyley	...	"	<i>Griffin.</i>
Mrs. Mails	...	"	<i>Nelly.</i>
Lilian	...	"	<i>Proserpine.</i>
Karminie	...	"	<i>Crosspatch.</i>

The riders were all ready, and after the usual two minutes start had been allowed to the paper carriers, they were given the short and familiar “ then go,” and all got away together.

The first jump, a hurdle, was successfully taken by every

one, and here Proserpine took the lead. The field then disappeared from the spectators' view behind a clump of palm trees and was next seen approaching the famous Jadabpore double jump, Proserpine still leading, closely followed by Moonshine and Nelly. The double jump was safely passed by all, till it came to Mr. Noodle's turn. He managed to get over the first jump, after a fashion, landing on the other side on his grey's neck. Before he could recover his seat, his horse was at the second jump which it refused, landing his rider inelegantly and slightly hurt on mother earth. The chase continued across the paddy fields, and all went "merry as a marriage bell," till the old gates (the entry to the jungles) were arrived at. Here Lilian unfortunately met with an accident which totally spoiled her chance of being among the first six of that day's chase. Shortly before reaching the old gates, Lilian had held in Proserpine to enable her to get breathing time, and thus be better fitted for the final effort. While doing this, Major Newcombe and Mrs. Mails took first and second positions in the chase. At the old gates Proserpine shied badly at an idiotic dhoby who tried to cross with his bullock between Mrs. Mails and Lilian. Lilian was thrown, but fortunately got off without further hurt than a sprained wrist. Capt. D'Oyley, who came up, gallantly dismounted, assisted Lilian to her saddle and conducted her back to Mr. Huntingdon.

The contest between Mrs. Mails and Major Newcombe for first place was a hard one, and ended in favor of the Major, who secured first honors, Mrs. Mails a good second, Mr. Cairn a bad third, while the others came in at straggling intervals. Karminie with Crosspatch did not arrive at the finish at all, and Lilian and Mr. Huntingdon were getting anxious, fearing that she had met with an accident. She at length made her appearance, coming slowly along the road, and when informed of Lilian's accident was grieved to hear of it.

"What happened to Crosspatch," Lilian asked Karminie, when they had reached home.

"He seemed sulky and out of temper and did not want to go at all, and when I urged him on he went wretchedly, and was taking the jumps in such bad form that I judged it best to pull him up and walk him along the road, so as to avoid accidents," replied Karminie.

Crosspatch was a horse of a stubborn and obstinate nature, and could be made nothing of when he was in one of his tantrums. He was a horse that could be made to do almost anything by means of kindness, and Lilian and the jockey Norman had found out this soft spot in his disposition.

The horse was unbroken when he was first purchased by Mr. Huntingdon, and handed over to Norman to be trained. Norman speedily found out the disposition of the animal he had to deal with, and only used gentle measures in his breaking in. It was not long before Lilian and Crosspatch were the best of friends, and the horse would always welcome her approach to his stable with a happy neigh, well knowing that a dainty piece of bread or a succulent morsel of sugarcane would be given him by his beautiful and well-pleased mistress. Crosspatch, ere long, proved himself to be more attached to Lilian than Proserpine. He would follow her about the compound more like a dog than a horse, and greatly to the terror of Mr. Huntingdon, who found the animal anything but tractable. Lilian wished to ride Crosspatch in the Paperchase, knowing how well he would have gone with her, and had only given him up to Karminie at the latter's earnest request.

Before the girls started to the meet Norman had advised Karminie to treat the horse with kindness, as he knew but too well the disastrous effects of anything like rough usage. Crosspatch immediately discovered that Lilian was not his rider, and forthwith became sulky. Karminie, after one or two attempts at coaxing him, lost patience and used her whip rather freely, with the result that the horse went worse than ever, and at last refused to go a step further. Then it was that Karminie, almost wild

with vexation, turned to the road, and came back in the undignified style above mentioned.

Karminie's temper was not improved by Norman's remark, "Told yer so Miss," when he heard the result of the morning's proceedings.

It was a great disappointment to Lilian that neither of her horses had secured first honors; for though she felt sure that Crosspatch could easily beat any horse that would start for the Paperchase Cup during the following week, her sprained wrist would debar her from ~~the~~ the pleasure of riding.

CHAPTER XX.

AFTER THE PAPERCHASE.

BEFORE the Doctor and Mrs. Mowbray left the Grange for Naini Tal, Mrs. Mowbray spoke seriously to Mr. Huntingdon urging him to shorten the engagement between her son and his daughter, and making him promise to consider the matter and consult Lilian about it.

So after the morning's excitement of the Paperchase was over, Mr. Huntingdon invited Lilian into his study.

"My love," he said, addressing her, "reluctant as I am to shorten the time of parting with my only child, I must not allow any selfish feelings to deter me from doing my duty. Mrs. Mowbray has been speaking very seriously to me and asking me to shorten your engagement with her son, and as I feel confident that both you young people would like to be married soon, and as she is beginning to fear for Edward who is left so much to himself, perhaps it would be better for me not to withhold my consent any longer to your early union. Karminie's marriage will also take place shortly, as Mr. Henry will be leaving India by the end of April. Why should not you two girls be married at the same time?"

"Pa," answered Lilian coaxingly, "surely you don't wish to get rid of me!"

"No," my child, he replied, "I should like to keep you always with me if it were possible. I thought I was acting for the best in trying to meet Mrs. Mowbray's wishes; if you prefer to wait I will not urge you against your inclinations my pet."

Mr. Huntingdon was anything but displeased at his daughter's disinclination to hasten the marriage. Mrs. Mowbray was aware of the condition on which Mr. Huntingdon had sanctioned the engagement of his daughter to Edward Somerville, and both she and her son had accepted it. The two

years' probation had not yet expired. It was only during her last visit to the Grange that she thought it better that the marriage should take place sooner. Perhaps she had observed the Lieutenant paying more attention than was desirable to a fair young girl with fair hair and large dark eyes. If such were her fears certainly the two young persons who disturbed her peace of mind were unconscious of any feeling save that of friendship.

Mrs. Mowbray had not been told of Mr. Henry's offer to Karminie, which had already been accepted by that young lady. She liked Karminie very much, but she was no exceptional parent, and her son's interest was her first consideration. Lilian was heiress to the Huntingdon estates; Karminie was portionless. It would be quixotic on the part of a Lieutenant in the army to marry a portionless bride; as it was Dr. Mowbray allowed his stepson two hundred rupees monthly as an addition to his pay, and Edward Sommerville was far from being an economical man, nor had he any desire to get staff employment. Lilian and he, when married, would have more money than would be required, hence the mother's anxiety to hasten the consummation of her hopes.

The next time Lilian saw the Lieutenant she told him of her decision, and he raising no objection she advised her father to write to Mrs. Mowbray and acquaint her with the fact.

Later during the day Mr. Henry called to take leave as he was returning with Sir Laurence to Dustypore by the evening loop mail. Karminie felt very depressed after he had gone, and said she would like to have Edith to spend a few days with them; she also thought it a favorable opportunity of finding out the object of Mrs. Ranford's *Hindoo Ayah's* visiting Mrs. Pry.

It was only a week now from Daisy's wedding day. The dresses had been ordered, and Mrs. Jennings' mind was fully occupied with thoughts of the wedding breakfast. Mr. Lancaster wished that the wedding should take place in the morning, and all the invitations had been sent out and the wedding eagerly looked forward to.

Everything seemed to progress smoothly and agreeably.

Mr. Appleton, true to his promise, had called upon Mrs. Pry, and the old lady had asked him as many questions as she thought necessary to Edith's interest. Col. and Mrs. Ranford had come to Calcutta for a short time, and Capt. D'Oyley was with them. He had mentioned to the Colonel the suspicious conduct of Ram Ram on the night of the Ball.

Col. Ranford, who had given the subject some thought this time, said it seemed very strange and that it should be carefully sifted.

As for Miss Piggy, she still did just as she pleased, for Lilian would not consent to Mrs. Jennings' kind proposal to keep her favorite within iron railings.

CHAPTER XXI.

MRS. RANFORD CALLS TO SEE MRS. PRY.

MRS. RANFORD went over to "Meddlesome Priory" to see Mrs. Pry, and to tell her that all her efforts to prevent the Colonel from visiting the Grange without her had failed. "He will go," she said, "and Capt. D~~O~~yley encourages him to annoy me."

Mrs. Pry was puzzled for a moment; then came the suggestion from her that Mrs. Ranford should obtain exact information from Ram Ram preparatory to writing an anonymous letter addressed to herself, which letter she should give to Mrs. Pry to post. Mrs. Ranford thought this a capital idea and hastened to her house intent on executing it without delay. She penned a few lines in the very worst English she could put together and in a disguised hand. Satisfied with the result of her efforts she took the note to Mrs. Pry, who posted it for her. It seems, however, that Mrs. Ranford in her excitement forgot to attach a postage stamp to the envelope, and so on the following day the postman delivered the letter with the bearing post mark. Mrs. Ranford was flushed with excitement on receiving it. Her nerves were so excited that when the time had at last come to expose the Colonel's guilt she got quite hysterical, shrieking and crying, till at last Col. Ranford getting quite alarmed sent for his Doctor. Mrs. Ranford was in a very excited state when the medical man arrived, and upon his questioning her as to the cause of her fit, she only shrieked the louder and told him to ask the Colonel.

"It is he the wretched man who is ill-treating me Doctor," cried Mrs. Ranford.

The Doctor was perplexed.

"Calm yourself, my dear Mrs. Ranford," he said, "I am sure there is some mistake."

The Colonel was always considered to be a generous, kind-hearted, and pleasant man, and it is therefore improbable that he would ill-treat his wife. Like other domestic enigmas presented to him in the course of his practice he left this one unsolved. He prescribed a draught for his patient and left her.

Mrs. Ranford had dropped the letter in her fit, and Capt. D'Oyley, who ran in at the time of her hysterics to see what the alarm was about, picked it up, and conveyed it to his own room. He afterwards showed it to the Colonel. Mrs. Ranford on her recovery searched for the missing letter, but she was unable to find it anywhere.

That very day, after breakfast, a letter arrived from the Grange addressed to Col. Ranford, a penciled note from Karminie. He read the letter, and tearing it up threw the contents into the waste paper basket.

Mrs. Ranford's suspicious watchful eyes followed him. Some time after, when the Colonel went out, she picked the pieces out of the basket, and joining them together read the contents of the letter which ran thus: "Meet me at Alipore at 6 this evening at the corner of Belvedere Road. I shall be in the pony trap. Destroy this after reading it."—K. G.

"I'll catch them," thought Mrs. Ranford. "I'll be there also; so this is the way they carry on? I have found them out; what a surprise it will be for both of them to see me there; this is the respectable Miss Granville, the niece of Mr. Huntingdon. I'll expose her and disgrace the Colonel." She then put away the letter.

Karminie had promised the Colonel that she would tell him all that she could learn from Edith concerning the visits of *Soondree Ayah* to Mrs. Pry, and she thought there could not be a more suitable place for a quiet chat than the one she had selected, so she wrote the note and sent it without a second thought. Just after she had despatched the peon, Signora Patellani came over and insisted upon the girls spending that evening with her. She had arranged for an afternoon tea party and a scratch dance, and she had been round

inviting her friends, and had brought an invitation for Capt. D'Oyley, which Lilian was asked to send to him. So all hope of Karminie's fulfilling her appointment with the Colonel came to an untimely end. She sent him a note enclosed in the Captain's invitation telling him so. Mrs. Ranford was not aware of the change of arrangements, so she drove to Alipore at a quarter to 6, and waited in her barouche at the corner of Belvedere Road. But the expected pony gig with its occupant did not arrive. It was nearly 8 o'clock when she returned home just in time for dinner; and great was her surprise to find her husband reclining in his easy chair in the balcony and lazily smoking his cigar, with a whiskey and soda on a table by his side.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE WEDDING.

THE carriages were all waiting in attendance to convey the wedding party from the Grange to the Cathedral. The brougham was there with its pair of handsome greys, and the coachmen and syces dressed in white with large white rosettes upon their coats. The landaulette with a pair of white horses, and the two barouches also, made quite a grand show.

The bride came down looking very sweet and pretty in her soft white trailing satin with wreaths of myrtle and orange blossoms, and her white bridal bonnet and veil, and as Mr. Huntingdon drew the little hand within his arm to lead her downstairs, he thought he had never seen Daisy look nicer and happier than she did on this her bridal morn. He placed her in the brougham, seating himself beside her. The three bridesmaids came next in their white Indian muslins and white crinoline bonnets trimmed with marguerites, and white ribbons streaming from them. They got into the landaulette together with Mr. Henry, who had come to Calcutta for the wedding. Then came the six little maidens whose ages ranged from six to eight years, dressed alike in white muslin frocks and little white bonnets, and holding in their hands large white baskets covered with white ribbon cockades and stuffed with white flowers, the perfume of which scented the air. Three of these little maidens went with Lieut. Sommerville and Capt. D'Oyley in the first barouche, while Major Newcombe followed in the second barouche with the other three. Mrs. Jennings in a miniature brougham and Norman in Lillian's pony gig brought up the rear.

Nearing the church they heard the chiming of the joy bells, and on reaching the Cathedral door the magnificent organ

sent forth its loud peals and the choral service commenced its sacred concert.

The congregation rose from their seats and stood while the bridal party walked up the aisle to the altar, where the Archdeacon with the Senior Chaplain of the church, and on the side of the altar Mr. Lancaster with his best man Col. Ranford, waited to receive the bride. The great Cathedral was crowded; there was scarcely a vacant chair to be seen in the whole body of the church. The sprinkling of bright uniforms among the many black frock coats gave to the church a gayer appearance than it would otherwise have worn. The ceremony commenced, and the plain gold ring placed upon the finger of the bride linked her future destiny with the man who now stood by her side. They entered their names in the register and received the congratulations of those guests who were able to make their way towards them through the crowd, while the bridesmaids did their work and pinned favors on the guests, and the six little maidens strewed the path with their sweetly-scented flowers. Then they all re-entered their carriages and drove to the Grange. Mr. Huntingdon gave up his place in the brougham to the bridegroom and drove home with the Colonel in Lancaster's conveyance. The whole street which ran alongside of the Grange was lined with carriages and both the reception rooms were thronged with guests. The large cake of seven tiers, with its rich almond icing and white decorations, was placed on a table ready to be cut, and a long narrow table covered with a white linen Damask cloth stood in the green-room laden with the bridal presents, marked with each giver's name. Dr. and Mrs. Mowbray did not come down for the wedding; their present was a pretty tea service of pure silver.

The cake was served round and the sparkling Fleur de Sillery freely drunk. After a few words from the Archdeacon the guests departed with the exception of those who were asked to the wedding breakfast. Among these latter were the Archdeacon, the Chaplain, Col. and Mrs. Ranford, Col. and Mrs. Waller, Major Newcombe, Capt. D'Oyley,

Lieut. Sommerville, Signora Patellani, her uncle Signor Citti, Mr. Henry, Mr. Appleton and Mrs. Pry.

The breakfast must have been a rare success, and Mrs. Jennings the very best of housekeepers, for the *recherché* meal had the effect of thawing even Mrs. Ranford's accustomed ill-humour, and even Piggy did not come this time to disturb her peace of mind, having been securely kept in by orders of Mrs. Jennings. The breakfast was followed by a scratch dance (proposed by Col. Ranford), for which the girls played by turns, while the rest of the company whirled round, until the hour came which apprised the bridegroom that they would have to make a move if they meant to catch the Darjeeling mail. The bride rose to change her white dress for a grey one, and the bridegroom his wedding suit for a travelling one. With the exception of the six little maids, the bridesmaids and all the guests accompanied the newly-married couple to the Sealdah Railway Station, and the train steamed out of the station on the first stage of the honeymoon trip to Darjeeling.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AFTER THE WEDDING.

"ARTHUR," said Karminie, coming out into the balcony where Mr. Henry stood, "I have a letter from your sister that I intended to show you this morning, but the excitement of the wedding put it out of my thoughts," saying which she gave him the note to read.

The letter was written in a neat hand, and contained but a few lines expressing the writer's pleasure on hearing of her brother's approaching marriage with so pretty a girl as Miss Granville. Mr. Henry, it seems, had raved about Karminie's loveliness to his sister, and who could blame him? For did she not look the picture of sweetness and beauty as she stood in the light of the moon's pale beams with her little head resting upon his shoulder and her fair hair freed from its fastenings falling like a cloak around her and half encircling him in its rippling folds? Mr. Henry was very pleased with his sister's note to Karminie; there were no expressions of gushing affection in it, but it was written with delicacy and taste.

He had also received a letter from her that very day and had brought it to show Karminie. Mr. Henry opened the letter and read it to her. It ran thus:—

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Your letter was quite an agreeable surprise to us. The Major and myself hope that you will keep your promise and spend a month at Bangalore before going home. We are very pleased to know that you have made so good a choice and selected so sweet and lovely a girl as Miss Granville for your wife.

"Karminie is a sweetly pretty name, and from what I have heard I think you could not have done better. You say that you run the chance of being married before leaving India. Well we send you our heartiest congratulations, and will welcome your bride with the greatest warmth. Your affectionate sister,—ALICE." *Bangalore, April.*

Mr. Henry folded the letter and replaced it in his coat pocket, and kissed the little face nestling so close to him.

"Arthur," exclaimed Karminie, "you take me back to my school days and the recollections of our good King Arthur, of whom I always love to read."

"And you remind me of his naughty Queen Guinevere," answered Mr. Henry, smiling and stroking her hair, whilst he quoted the lines from Tennyson's *Guinevere* :—

"O goddess hair with which I used to play
Not knowing ! O imperial moulded form,
And beauty such as never woman wore."

Mr. Henry was poetical by nature, and the beautiful night served to make him more sentimental than usual.

These two lovers looked very happy as Lieut. Sommerville afterwards remarked to Lilian with a sigh, for he was the unlucky cause of disturbing their tranquillity. He had stepped into the balcony after dinner to finish his half-smoked cigar, and perhaps to indulge in his own thoughts, when he found Mr. Henry and Karminie there. They both started, and the Lieutenant with a hasty apology, and throwing away the remains of his cigar, retired into the drawing-room to seek Lilian's company. Mr. Henry and Edward Sommerville were the only visitors dining at the Grange that evening. Mr. Henry, who never smoked, left the table immediately after the ladies had risen, and Mr. Huntingdon, feeling very tired, had dozed off in his chair after making a few observations of an ordinary kind to his future son-in-law, leaving the poor fellow to his own resources. The Lieutenant, finding his host would be better left alone, rose and walked upstairs. Perhaps the thoughts induced by the sight of the lovers outside caused him to sigh when mentioning to Lilian what he had just seen. They looked so happy, these two sweethearts—Karminie with a blush upon her cheek and Mr. Henry with a bright happy expression in his light blue eyes. What was it that made Edward Sommerville sigh ? Could it be discontent !

Lilian was a beautiful girl and his own choice ; there was nothing in her to find fault with ; what was it then ? It was true that she reminded him more of a marble statue than of a living and passionate woman. Even Galatea descended from her pedestal sometimes and came to Pygmalion.

Lilian was never demonstrative ; she was by nature cold and reserved ; still there were times when the sunshine thawed the ice. As he entered the drawing-room he saw his lady love reclining upon a sofa reading a book. Her white dress with the lilies on her bosom again brought to his mind the statue "Galatea." As he approached her, she raised her eyes from the novel, remarking : " I was glancing through 'Lothair.' What do you think of the Lady Corisande, Edward ? " she asked.

" I do not care for any of Beaconsfield's works," he answered peevishly and with a gloomy expression on his face, as he seated himself upon a chair close by her side.

Lilian smiled and wondered what had gone wrong with him.

" Are you not well, Edward ? " she enquired, " you seem so peculiar this evening."

" How happy Henry and Karminie seem," he said with a sigh. " Lilian, why am I so wretched ? I never thought things had gone so far with them."

" Is that the cause of your miserable looks, Mr. Sommerville ? Do you regret our engagement ? " she replied.

Lilian was pained at his tone, and the tears came to her eyes in spite of herself.

Edward Sommerville felt very unhappy to find he had grieved her. Springing to her side, and throwing his arms around her, he said : " Lilian, forgive me, I never meant to hurt you. Oh ! Lily, why are you as cold as a marble statue ? Why cannot we be as happy as those two out on the balcony ? "

Perhaps it had not until then struck Lilian that Edward Sommerville might think her cold, and it smote her conscience to think that possibly she had used him badly ; her only answer was to kiss him and say : " Poor Edward, I fear you think I am using you ill ; perhaps it would have

been better had you not chosen me. Karminic with her bright and sunshiny nature would have been better suited to you."

The Lieutenant made no response to the remark, but reseating himself he changed the conversation by asking if she intended to run her horses in the races that year.

"I think I shall enter Crosspatch for the Viceroy's Cup," was the reply.

"Crosspatch," he answered in astonishment; "why the horse is untrustworthy; if he were to run as he did at the paperchase meet it would never do."

"Norman says he is worth trying," she remarked.

"Although I think highly of Norman's opinion," he answered, "I have my doubts as to Crosspatch. Are you going to back him?"

"That is what I should like you to do for me," she replied.

"It's risky, but I don't suppose you want to have more than a tenner or so on the horse. You ought to be able to get long odds," answered the Lieutenant.

"I want you to back the horse to win for, say, ten thousand pounds," replied Lilian.

"Whew! ten thousand pounds," he repeated; "over a lac of rupees. How can you plunge so desperately? The horse will be up to a pretty short price before one can do that. The days are passed when you could back a horse for a lot of money at long odds; it will cost you nearly five hundred pounds."

"I have the money to pay even should I lose, and it will not matter if I do," said Lilian, "while on the other hand if I win I'll go halves with you."

"I could not take half the winnings unless I was prepared to bear a moiety of the losses, and I don't know where I could find the money," he replied.

"I'll lend it to you," she said.

"Oh no, that won't be fair," he answered. "No, I'll be hanged if I encourage you to throw away your money like that; you must give up the idea, Lilian; what would your father think of my allowing you to be so foolish?"

"He won't mind it, and besides I am not going to take the money from him. I have saved it from my allowance. It's no use trying to dissuade me, Edward; I have made up my mind, and if you will not help me, I will ask some one else to do so."

Lieut. Sommerville thought it over for a moment, and then said: "Well, if you are determined to run the risk, I must humour you, but I won't take a loan of the money from you. I'll ask Ranford to give it to me."

"Why not ask Cliff; he can better spare it, if you are too proud to take it from me," she replied.

"No," he answered, "I shall get it from Ranford or D'Oyley, and there is an end of the question. Moonshine is the horse I should like to back or else Lord G—'s Fenian. I fancy Crosspatch will stand a poor chance against them. You scarcely know anything about him except that he has had the best of it in a rough gallop with Snowflake. You saw Crosspatch lose in the paperchase, and I cannot help having but a poor opinion of him."

"He never would have lost had I ridden him," said Lilian.

"He is a sulky brute and not to be depended upon," spoke the Lieutenant.

"Norman and I will see to his good training before the race comes off," she answered.

"All right," he replied, resigning himself to his fate. "I'll put the bets on for you."

Lilian had great hopes of Crosspatch winning the race; she had consulted her jockey on the matter, and he had given her every encouragement for thinking as she did.

"He will turn the laugh against some of them," Norman prophesied to Lilian when she asked his opinion as to entering Crosspatch for the Cup.

Mr. Henry then came in with Karminie to bid Lilian goodnight. Lieut. Sommerville also rose to go, and before leaving the house both gentlemen went into the dining-room to take leave of their host, who had just awakened, wondering how it was that dinner had taken so long and why he had been left alone.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CAPTAIN DOYLEY DISTINGUISHES HIMSELF.

MR. HENRY had not visited the Grange for two days after the evening on which Sommerville and he had dined there. On the third day Mr. Henry called and was closeted with Mr. Huntingdon in his study for nearly an hour, after which he remained for five o'clock tea with the girls, and then walked about in the garden with Karminie. He knew it was a painful subject he had to speak about, and was at a loss how to begin, until Karminie herself made the opening by asking what he had in particular to say to her uncle. He then led Karminie to a bench, and placing himself beside her took her hand in his, and said :

"I think I ought to tell you, dear girl, that I may not, as intended, be able to marry before going home."

Karminie felt very disappointed, and was too impulsive a girl to hide her feelings.

"Why cannot you marry me before going home?" she asked.

"I am afraid you will not understand me when I say the doctors think me in too delicate a state of health to marry immediately. I have been very ill, Karminie, and when I mentioned to my doctor my intention to marry before going to England, he strongly advised me not to. This is why I went into your uncle's study to speak to him," he replied.

"Why did you consult the Doctor about it, Arthur? I am sure it was no business of his," said Karminie.

"I had to. What do you say to waiting; will you miss me very much?"

"Oh, Arthur, I cannot reconcile myself to such a cruel thing," Karminie replied, "you will be away two years. It seems a lifetime."

"I shall come back sooner if you will agree to wait, darling girl."

Karminie hesitated, and he continued: "Perhaps I ought not to bind you by an engagement, but leave you free until I return, and if we are of the same mind then, we can be married."

Karminie was hurt at his speech and said: "I cannot understand your meaning; is it that you wish to be free? Be frank with me, Arthur. If it is that you regret having spoken to me too soon, you have only to retract your words, and I will not reproach you."

She looked so pale and unhappy that Mr. Henry grew quite alarmed, and explained:

"You wrong me, Karminie, I did not mean to insinuate that I wanted our engagement broken off. It would pain me to think that you had so poor an opinion of me, and even if such an idea were among my thoughts, no man of honor could free himself without the consent of the lady."

"And do you think, Mr. Henry, that I should hold you to a promise as bound if you were anxious to be free," asked Karminie.

"No, I should think you had too much pride for that," he replied.

And before Karminie had time to speak again Lilian came into the garden, and walking towards them, said: "Edward has at last settled the purchase of the pair of Burmahs for me, which I want for my new tandem cart."

"What an extravagant girl you are to be sure," remarked Karminie. "Why, you will now have, let me see, one, two, three riding horses, the pony, and the tandem pair, six in number. I wish I was as fortunate."

"I shall have only five horses," answered Lilian. "Firefly is yours. I intended her for you, but I do not suppose you will care to have her now that you will be going home soon."

"Going home," repeated Karminie. "Are you tired of me already and wish me to get away?"

"I am afraid you would not consult my wishes," replied Lilian, looking at Mr. Henry with a meaning glance. When

she noticed the look of pain upon his countenance she turned to Karminie for an explanation, but that young lady said: "I shall tell you all, Lily, when we retire."

"Poor girl," spoke Lilian after Mr. Henry had gone home, and the girls had retired for the night. "I fear we are doomed to be old maids; none of the men will burden themselves with such troublesome wives."

"It's all very well for you, Lilian," replied Karminie; "it's not Edward Sommerville's fault that you are not yet married; he is very anxious to get the wedding over."

"That is for she want of something better to do," said Lilian. "If it were but the racing season, he would not care a bit about getting married. You must wait patiently, Karminie, and during Mr. Henry's absence in England you must occupy your time in taking an interest in horses. How long will he be away?"

"Two years at the most," she answered.

"That's not long," said Lilian.

"I think it a lifetime," replied Karminie, "and who knows but that he may take a fancy to some other girl while in England."

"You will at least have the satisfaction of feeling that he can't get a prettier wife, and if he be so fickle he is not worth the trouble of caring for, and there are lots of nicer fellows, I am sure. I should not fret myself beforehand. I never knew you to be despondent, Karminie," spoke Lilian.

The girl laughed and tried to show that she did not care; still the sad look in her eyes made Lilian anxious about her cousin and angry with Mr. Henry.

On the next day the Burmah ponies were sent to the Grange and harnessed to the tandem cart. Lilian thought them the prettiest chesnuts she had ever seen, as seating herself firmly in the trap, and taking the reins in hand with an easy confidence which proved her to be a skilful whip, she invited Karminie to her side, and then drove her showy little ponies along the Ballygunge roads as far as the rice fields. Even Karminie for the moment forgot her grief as the ponies went flying along, and remarked what a stylish

pair they were, and how much credit Mr. Sommerville deserved for his selection. Lilian Huntingdon was known for her love of good horses, and as she passed by the rather numerous equestrians on the road, many were the admiring glances and many were the remarks in favour of the handsome girl and her new purchase. Some gentlemen even rode up and congratulated her on her choice, and by the time the two girls returned home they both seemed cheerful.

Mr. Henry left Calcutta in the evening after paying the Grange one more visit, and Karminie knew she would not see him again until about the time that he was to start for England, and Lilian did all she could to cheer her cousin, and even proposed taking a short trip to Peepulpore to divert the girl's mind.

In the meantime Mrs. Ranford got another anonymous letter, and this time, having more confidence in herself, she showed the letter to the Colonel, who was furious and vowed vengeance on the unknown writer. The contents of the letter were a few lines, intimating an intimate friendship between the Colonel and poor Karminie, and warning Mrs. Ranford to be on her guard. The lines were horribly scrawled and the spelling atrocious. On this occasion Mrs. Ranford was not the only one who received an anonymous missive: later on it will appear that Mr. Henry was inflicted with a like dastardly letter of a similar import. Karminie had in a moment of impulse mentioned to Edith her engagement to Mr. Henry, and Edith had conveyed the news to her mother, not intending of course that any harm should come of it, or that Mrs. Pry should tell it to Mrs. Ranford.

About the third day after the anonymous letters had reached the respective addressees, Karminie received a letter from Mr. Henry saying that on second consideration he thought it best that she should be free until his return from Europe, whereupon Karminie replied that she released him from his engagement, as from the contents of his note it seemed to be a source of regret instead of pleasure to him. Mr. Henry felt on receiving her answer to his note that he ought not to have written

as he did, and he ought not so readily to have given credence to so diabolical a statement as that contained in the anonymous letter that he had received. He wrote to her again saying that she ought to reconsider her decision, the declaration of which gave him much pain; he also said in a few words that he would consider himself bound, and if Karminie was unmarried on his return he would be ready to fulfil his promise.

Karminie felt too miserable to reply, so she said nothing. When Mr. Henry called to say good-by before leaving the country he repeated the words he had written.

Arthur Henry was a weak man. On receiving the anonymous letter he felt very uncomfortable, but not having the courage to ascertain the truth or otherwise of its contents from the girl it had so maligned he left her with a doubt preying upon his mind.

On the evening that Mrs. Ranford received the second anonymous epistle, Capt. D'Oyley left the boarding house after dinner to go over to the Grange, as he often did.

He walked a little distance intending to take a gharry further on, when he suspected that somebody was following him. Hailing a ticca he pulled up the shutters and instructed the man to drive on fast, while he himself slipped behind a clump of trees. Ram Ram, for it was no other than the confidential Hindoo spy, thinking the gentleman had got into the gharry, and mistaking him in the dark streets for the Colonel, gave chase to the carriage with the intention of getting up behind. Ram Ram had no such success this time, for as he was passing the clump of trees Capt. D'Oyley pinned him in his strong arms. He closely questioned the boy, but the lad was too cautious even to reply, whereupon the Captain lost all patience and gave Ram Ram the soundest thrashing he had ever had. The yells and shrieks of the boy brought the inmates of the boarding house, as well as the police, to the spot. Mrs. Ranford got hysterics when she saw what had happened, and whispered something to her Ayah, who had also rushed to the scene.

CHAPTER XXV.

TWO DESPONDENT LOVERS CONSOLE EACH OTHER.

KARMINIE sat by herself in the green room with her head resting on the cushions of the sofa and her arms lying listlessly by her side, while the scalding tears fell from her eyes, and the half smothered sobs shook her frame. It was the first real grief she had ever known ; for she was too young to remember the death of her dear parents, who had left their little daughter to the care of her grandmother. She felt disappointed and unhappy, and although Mr. Henry had assured her of his keeping his promise to her on his return to India, still she felt that there was some great sorrow in store for her, and like a girl who had never been accustomed to troubles she gave vent to tears.

Mr. Huntingdon was out, and Lilian had gone out shopping with Mrs. Mails, who came to take both the girls, and then keep them to lunch with her, but Karmine excused herself on the plea of a headache. When she found herself alone she wandered aimlessly through the halls, thinking of her lover, and taking a volume of Tennyson's poems from the library she walked into the green room and read through the pages of Guinevere, until she came to the lines which Mr. Henry had quoted to her (it was the golden hair which reminded him of Arthur's queen); then as the recollection of that evening came back to her she fairly broke down and sobbed. She was too absorbed in her grief to notice any one who might have chanced to come in, and she had given orders to the servants to say that Mr. Huntingdon and his daughter were both out, in case any one called. It was only when she heard her name mentioned and heard a few soothing words whispered in her ear that she became aware of some one's presence, and recognized the familiar voice of Edward

Sommerville. He came noiselessly into the room on hearing from the servants that she was there, and that Lilian and Mr. Huntingdon were out. He had come to town unexpectedly and on business, and having completed his work he went to the Grange.

"Karminie, do not cry," he said. "What is it that makes you so unhappy? Look up, my poor girl."

He was kneeling near her and was trying to lift her face, but she sobbed all the more and appeared inconsolable. Edward Sommerville, like many men, was unmanned at the sight of a woman's tears, and he almost cursed the man who had been the cause of this fair creature's grief, for he had been told that Mr. Henry could not marry before he went away, and he felt certain that it was this that made Karminie so sorrowful. He entreated her not to cry, and felt annoyed with Lilian for having left her to herself. Rising from his kneeling posture he took her in his arms, like a brother would have done, and soothed and implored her to dry her tears; he pushed back the hair from off her brow and kissed her and said: "You must not fret, dear, and spoil your pretty looks; we all have our sorrows and he will come back again."

Edward Sommerville was of a soft and affectionate nature, and his heart yearned towards the girl who was an orphan. Karminie, too, loved him as she would have, had he been her own brother; he would soon be married to Lilian, and there is very little difference, Karminie thought, between a cousin and a brother. Perhaps it was a stronger feeling that Edward Sommerville had towards the lovely girl, but of which he was unconscious until this moment; anyhow he soothed and comforted her. Karminie had now extricated herself from his arms and sat near him, but still crying.

"I cannot reconcile myself to it," she at length said. "What have I done to be so miserable? It is all very well for those who have no sorrows. Daisy has married and is happy. Lilian and you will soon be married and will also be happy, and I shall be left all to myself."

"Be happy!" poor Lieut. Sommerville sighed as he thought of Lilian's icy disposition. "Be married, that may, or may not be, but to be happy, surely Karminie had made a mistake," he thought. Yes! if he had been "Crosspatch" or "Proserpine" or one of the tandem ponies, or naughty "Piggy," or even one of the hounds, he might have stood a chance of being happy, but as he was Edward Sommerville, Adjutant of a British Infantry Regiment, a human being, with all the depth of love and passions of a man, there was not the slightest hope of happiness for him. At times Lilian said poor Edward and kissed him, and when he saw her brighten most and be kind to him was on the day that he selected the tandem ponies to her satisfaction. He would have laughed had any one told him that the marble statue Lilian, his Galatea, was in love; he thought her incapable of such a feeling, and he yearned again towards the bright and warm-hearted girl by his side.

Karminie finding that he did not answer her continued: "What have I to live for? I have no money, no estates like Lilian has, no horses to run in the races, and no dogs; mine is a dull and purposeless existence without one ray of sunshine to brighten it. I must go back to grandma'. She is a good old soul, but one can't always live upon their grandmother's love with no other ambition than to look into her dear old face and read her story books."

"Oh! Karminie, do not say such dreadful things," answered Edward Sommerville. "Your beauty and your warm and loving disposition are among earth's brightest jewels. It is true that Lilian has every comfort and every luxury, and that she is as generous as she is wealthy, and as lovely as she is generous, but Karminie I would give all that I possess and more to have a little warmth of nature and a little love in my composition were I poor Lilian. She is as cold as a marble statue, and the only time she brightens is when Norman talks to her of her horses, or when she sees Piggy running to her."

"You wrong Lilian," spoke Karminie, "and you do not

understand her. She is noble in all her actions, and she would never stoop to do an injury to any one even though she were to benefit through it. There is a great deal of feeling which she hides beneath the marble exterior. 'He who has most of heart has most of sorrow,' Edward; you should indeed be grateful that you have so priceless a pearl."

Karminie felt sorry for the young man, for she also thought that Lilian was a little colder to him than she ought to be, and she had discovered her cousin's secret some time since, yet she did her utmost to dispel such an idea from his mind and consoled him as best she could.

Edward Sommerville was very fond of Lilian when first they were engaged, but he had been wearying of it, and her coldness had chilled him at times. He felt that he was more an *aide-de-camp* to her than a lover, and Mrs. Mowbray, fearing this for her boy, had urged Mr. Huntingdon to let the engagement terminate in an immediate marriage. These two young persons were talking to each other and consoling each other when Mr. Huntingdon returned. Going into the drawing-room in search of Lilian and not finding her, he went into the green-room, and to his surprise met only Karminie and Edward Sommerville.

"You here alone, Karminie," he said addressing his niece, and shaking hands with the young Lieutenant.

"Yes, uncle, Lilian has gone out with Mrs. Mails and intends staying to lunch; she also invited me, but I have a bad headache and had no inclination to go out."

"My poor child," said Mr. Huntingdon as he drew Karminie to the light and looked into her face and noticed her swollen eyelids. "Why, Karminie, you have been crying," he said and glanced at the young man for an explanation.

"I found her in a torrent of tears when I came nearly an hour ago," he answered.

"I am sorry to see you so, dear," spoke her uncle. "You will make yourself quite ill, Karminie. This will never do. I must ask Lilian not to leave you by yourself again; Sommerville," he said, "please order the *Khan-*

samah to fetch a bottle of champagne ; tell him he need not make it too cold." He then took Karminie into his room and bathed her face with cold water from a sponge.

The man appeared with glasses and the champagne. Helping Sommerville and himself and ordering a tumbler for Karminie he filled it to the brim and made her drink it off. This soon put her into better spirits, and after Lieut. Sommerville left, Karminie retired to her room and slept till evening.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LILIAN'S EXPEDITION.

"I FEEL quite distressed about Karminie. I don't think she ought to be left to herself in her present frame of mind," remarked Mr. Huntingdon to Lilian on her return home from her visit to Mrs. Mails. "She is taking to heart Mr. Henry's departure and is giving way to it a deal more than is good for her. I found her in tears when I came in; it was all that Sommerville could do to console her; he afterwards told me that she was nearly hysterical when he saw her. Why one would fancy Henry had gone home for good, whereas at the outside it is only for two years."

"I did not know Edward intended coming down to-day," said Lilian.

"He came to town on business, and having spare time came over. I am glad that he did, for I should not have known what to do, had I been alone with Karminie; he quieted her a good bit before I came back," answered Mr. Huntingdon.

"Poor Karminie," sighed Lilian, "she has an idea that Mr. Henry may fall in love with some other girl in England and marry her during his stay there."

"Such a notion is absurd. Henry is a gentleman, and would never do anything so dishonorable; besides he has given me his word to marry Karminie when he returns should she still be willing to have him," spoke Mr. Huntingdon. "I think the best plan would be to take Karminie for a change; a little diversion would probably do her good."

"It would do her all the good in the world, and I should suggest our going to Peepulpore, Pa' dear," said Lilian.

"Why not Rowdypore," he asked. "It is closer to Calcutta."

"We can go to Rowdypore later on," she replied; "it would scarcely be a change going there, and I am anxious to see Peepulpore. I hear it is a pretty little place."

"Well I hardly remember it," said Mr. Huntingdon, "but all places in Bengal are very hot about this time of the year, and Peepulpore especially so, owing to the hot winds."

"But the rains will set in soon," pleaded Lilian, who was not at all inclined to relinquish the idea of going, after having made up her mind. "We need not be there for more than a couple of months, Pa'. With your permission I shall write to Mrs. Brookes to-day."

"Very well, my love," he replied, "since you are so anxious to go I withdraw my objections; only give me a day's notice before starting so that I may get ready. Will Karminie be agreeable; you have not consulted her yet?"

"No, and I do not intend to; it is for her good and she must come."

So accordingly Lilian wrote a few lines to the lady manager at Brookville, asking her to reserve a couple of bed rooms for her father, Karminie and herself. She then went in search of her cousin, whom she found just awakened from a long slumber refreshed and in better spirits, but still with a slight headache.

"Karminie, what do you say to our visiting Peepulpore?" asked Lilian. "I have just written for rooms at Brookville."

"As I have not been consulted I have no alternative but to go," replied Karminie with a smile.

"That's all right? I shall drive you to Rowdypore to-morrow morning; it will be a fine run for the ponies; they have not enough of exercise and a long drive will do us good. I vote that we start at five so as to be in nice time for *chota hazree*. I am sure Cliff will be glad to accompany us on horseback. D'Oyley would also come if asked," said Lilian.

"I dare say, but where are we going for *chota hazree* like a band of impostors intruding upon people?" replied Karminie.

"We will go to the Chummery and rouse Edward; won't he be surprised to see us?" said Lilian.

"Is uncle also going?" enquired her cousin.

"No, we will not say a word about it to him until we return," replied Lilian.

The girls had not long to wait for Capt. D'Oyley's consent to going, for he came over almost immediately after the conversation between Lilian and Karminie; and Lilian sent a line to Major Newcombe bidding him come over precisely at five o'clock next morning as she intended driving to Rowdypore.

Capt. D'Oyley mentioned to Karminie all that had occurred the night before, how he had caught the youth who was watching them on the night of the ball, and added that he was now sure that he would stop watching them in future.

But in this belief the Captain was mistaken, for Ram Ram, who was far too persevering to give up, especially as he was well fed, continued his vigilance on his recovery, which happened about the time that the girls returned from Peepulpore. Soondree Ayah, who had rushed to the scene of the disturbance, managed to smuggle Ram Ram through the crowd unperceived, and bathed and dressed his wounds at home until he quite recovered. The Captain was not sorry when he found he received no notice to attend the Police Court, for which he ought to have thanked Mrs. Ranford, who emptied the contents of her well-filled purse into Soondree's hands in order to hush up the matter.

Major Newcombe and Capt. D'Oyley were both mounted, and were waiting at the Grange next morning punctually at the hour appointed to accompany the girls to Rowdypore. Although this was the beginning of May, the morning was fresh and cool as the little party started on their expedition; half an hour's fast driving brought them to their destination.

One might well picture the surprise on the faces of the Chummerians as some of them who were dressing for parade looked out from their windows, and saw a pony tandem with two ladies, and their *aides-de-camp* accompanying them.

"By Jove," exclaimed one of the fellows, "this is a pretty state of affairs storming us like this," while another called out, "Sommerville, here is an agreeable surprise for you."

The men had dismounted and had assisted the girls out of the tandem by the time Edward Sommerville came rushing down the steps, for the Chummery was a large two-storied house. It was situated on the Grand Trunk Road, and opposite the Maidan; it had immense grounds, which were kept in good order.

"Were you going to parade, Edward?" asked Lilian as she saw him dressed in uniform.

"I ought to have gone," he replied, "but I have sent word to say I am indisposed, and will take parade in the evening."

Some of the officers went to parade, whilst the others stayed and joined the little party at *chota hazzrêe*, and before they started for Calcutta the gentlemen made champagne cup for the ladies and had pegs themselves. After a couple of hours' rest, the tourists were on their way back to the Grange.

Lieut. Thornycliffe was the man whom Sommerville had destined for Karminie, and he had mentioned him to her on their way home from the Exhibition in the preceding December. This morning when that gentleman heard from his bearer that two *miss sahibs* had come in a pony chaise and had gone to the Chummery his curiosity was roused, and dressing himself quickly he went over on his way to office to see who the young ladies were. But the facial contortions in which he usually indulged proved fatal to him, for if Karminie did at one time have the notion of taking a fancy to him, she relinquished it as soon as she set eyes on the man.

Mr. Huntingdon was not a little surprised to learn of their morning's outing when Lilian mentioned it to him.

"You will be running all over the country, my dears, if you have gallant *aides-de-camp* like Newcombe and D'Oyley to aid and abet you," he said.

CHAPTER XXVII.

PEEPULPORE.

ABOUT a fortnight after the events recorded in the last chapter, Mr. Huntington, with Lilian and Karminie, started by the five o'clock loop mail for Peepulpore. There was a half-hour halt at Burdwan for dinner. The early morning brought them to their destination. Peepulpore is a pretty little place on the river Ganges. It derives its name from the sacred Peepul Tree. Many of these venerable trees line the public road and adorn every little rising ground which is reserved for the sacred rites of the Hindoos. The station has an old-world grandeur about it, which reminds one of what a Hindoo city must have been three hundred years ago. A large common encompassed by a wall and surrounded by a moat is designated the Fort, and old Peepulporeans, who have lived their lives within a radius of six miles of their birthplace, while their thoughts have wandered to distant lands, have had their imagination fired by a fancied resemblance between their native place, the fort with its beautiful river views, and the Queen of the Adriatic. Peepulpore being a civil station, it has its jail, which has the reputation of being paternally administered, for the famishing wretches who have once seen its inside, and have been accustomed to regular meals, adequate clothing and light work, have carried to their homes tender recollections of their incarceration, and have given such glowing accounts to their half-starved relatives and friends, that the latter have been induced to commit petty offences for no other purpose than to profit by the kindness of the British Sircar. It is thus that the jail is always full. It has its Doctor and Superintendent, and its industries, oil-pressing and flour-grinding, and to the people around, it is looked upon as a hospital for the needy and

distressed. Peepulpore has also its public gardens, the gift of a wealthy Hindoo gentleman ; its church ; a clock tower, presented by the European millionaire of those parts ; a large house built on an eminence, which is the first object that meets the eye as the train steams into the station ; the cutcherries, bazar, tennis courts ; and, lastly, the club. We must not, however, forget the Baptist Chapel, for a large section of the English community takes its religion as it does its manners from the aforesaid European millionaire ; nor the mosque at the bend of the river ; nor the large pucca ghât ; and still further along the Strand, the smaller ghâts and the benches placed for the convenience of the people. Nor can we omit Gurumkund and its hot springs, the resort of pilgrims and invalids ; nor Shadypore (five miles distant from Peepulpore) with its large workshops and railway offices, grand hills and railway tunnel. The girls, who were fatigued after the long journey, were unable to make their appearance at the breakfast table on the morning of their arrival, and the first time they entered the drawing-room was a little before the hour for afternoon tea.

Mr. Huntingdon alone made an early toilette and was ready when the welcome bell announced the morning repast. Brookville, with the exception of being a large bungalow with about eight to ten bed-rooms, a neat drawing-room, all of which looked clean and tidy, had no other remarkable points.

It was the rainy season, and the river which ran alongside of the house was swollen and nearly five miles broad. The overflow covered all the sand banks which are visible during the winter and summer months. Brookville does not boast a garden ; the ground about the house is used for pasturing cows and sheep.

The lady of the house, a cheerful and ladylike person, but at times given to mild scandal, met the girls in the drawing-room, and after the usual enquiries as to their journey and its attendant fatigue, which she hoped had worn off, invited them into the adjoining room to tea, which was quite a welcome refreshment. The table was

spread with cakes, bread, butter, jams, and fruit; the tea was good and the lodgers indulged in as many cups as they pleased, for Mrs. Brookes, the lady of the house, always looked after the comfort of her lodgers. After tea they all went to the club for tennis, the ladies amusing themselves as they could after the games were over, and the gentlemen congregating in the billiard-room playing and pegging. Then they all returned home again and changed their clothes for dinner. There were not many visitors in the house at this time; the civil surgeon of the station, one or two railway officials, and a few planters were all. After dinner Mrs. Brookes opened her square Broadwood and gave them some music, and Karminie sang *Si tu savais*; this sort of thing was the daily routine. Sometimes little scratch picnics were made up, and a few persons got together and drove down in bamboo pony gigs to Gurumkund or Kunchinfoodle point and Jockeypore with a hamper and had *chota hazree* in the open air. Peepulpore is livelier during the Poojahs and X'mas month, when the planters come in from the indigo concerns and pitch their tents in the grounds of Brookville. It is at the height of the season then—balls, boating excursions and theatricals take place, and at times the residents and visitors at Peepulpore drive or take the local train to Shadypore, where penny readings and balls at the Institute are almost of weekly occurrence.

Lilian and Karminie caused a great sensation in the station, as was to be expected, by the appearance of two beautiful girls in a place not very remarkable for female beauty, although there were quadruple the number of women to men. The men, few as they were, flocked round the new comers; even the elderly gentlemen who were eligible made themselves look quite spruce, and waxed their moustaches; some even shaved off their Mogul-like beards in order to look young.

Karminie was considered the prettier of the two girls, but nobody forgot that Lilian was the heiress, which circumstance gave her the greater attraction.

The only military man in the place was Colonel Harcourt,

District Superintendent of Police, who had recently married the daughter of a District and Sessions Judge, a dear little woman much attached to her husband and the life of the station. She was many years his junior. Mr. Huntingdon with the girls called upon them and they soon became the best of friends. The Doctor also did his utmost to please, and showed them the places of interest, and when the Huntingdons returned to the Grange they were not sorry that they had visited Peepulpore.

Colonel and Mrs. Harcourt promised to pay them a visit about the time of Lilian's wedding, and so the days passed away until winter came. Norman had been training the two horses for the coming races, which Lilian eagerly looked forward to.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SONEPORE MEETING.

SONEPORE, as everybody knows, is a Raj of India in the districts of Behar and Sarun.

The great fair, or "mela" as the natives term it, takes place there yearly in the month of November. There it is that all kinds of animals are brought for sale—elephants, horses and cattle. There, on a large stretch of green sward, a number of tents are pitched for visitors to the fair, and during the few days that it lasts, it is a perfect scene of all sorts of gaieties. Sporting, racing, hunting, picnicing and dancing are indulged in to the heart's content.

These amusements are mostly got up by the Tirhoot planters, who come down in their gigs, bringing their horses and dogs; and with their minds fully made up for a gala time and a good spree—bold, free-hearted and open-handed men, who spend their money without thought, and who, when they make up their minds for pleasure, "go the whole hog."

There are also civil and military men who join these amusements, and some of the native Chiefs of India, among whom are their Highnesses the Maharajahs of Hutwa, Durbunga, Bettiah, and Bumraon, who take a lively interest in them. Real sporting Rajahs these, whose example might well be followed by the Indian nobility. It is not to be supposed that the Huntingdons from the Grange with their little party were to be exceptional and to be out of the fun. "No fear," they all went: Mr. Huntingdon with his daughter and niece and their friends, who were composed of Signora Patellani, Major Newcombe, Capt. D'Oyley and Lieut. Sommerville.

Norman took charge of the horses—"Proserpine," who was to run for the "Bettiah Cup" on the second day

of the races, and pony "Jim," a 13-3 C. B. (a new purchase of Lilian's) intended for the "Merchants' Cup." Sommerville had entered his "Little One," a pony 13-2, for the "Tom Thumb Stakes," and the Major "Moonshine" for the "Durbunga Cup." None of the horses belonging to the Grange party took part in the third day's racing.

"I can't see that animal's good points," remarked one of the fellows to his companion, pointing his switch towards "Moonshine."

"He has wonderful power in his loins, and his deep girth gives plenty of room for the lungs to play," was the reply.

"Excellent points in a hunter, but misplaced in a racer," said the first speaker; "that animal in my opinion has not the true race-horse stride."

"He may not cover so much ground as Col. P.—'s stud-bred," answered his friend, "but he is uncommonly quick in his gallop, and takes two strides while another horse takes one."

"Who rides him?" was the enquiry.

"The Major himself."

"What, Newcombe, that little fellow with the fair moustaches? He does not look much of an equestrian."

"He is considered a splendid rider, and has many times steered a horse to victory," was the answer.

Let the reader picture to himself a number of fine horses and ponies, many of them blood animals: each horse led by its attendant syce and followed by anxious trainers, while their riders carefully inspect the buckling of girths, regulate the length of stirrup leathers, and, as far as human foresight will permit, try and provide against accidents during the coming struggle. Then the clothing is removed and the animals' shining coats are revealed to the eyes of the admiring spectators. The attendant satellites assist the riders to divest themselves of their overcoats, and the latter emerge from their chrysalis state in all the butterfly splendour of racing dandyism. They then give the jockeys a leg up and help them to vault

lightly into their saddles—beautiful riders who, as soon as they take their seats, become so many modern living centaurs.

Gently they gather up their reins, press their caps firmly on their heads, slant the points of their whips to their mounts' right flank, and after a short preliminary canter they take the horses quietly to the post and await the signal for the start.

On the other side of the course under a tent were a group of men pegging and betting. Here jockeys and gentlemen mixed without distinction until it was time for them to part to view the coming race.

"Proserpine," when her clothing was removed, and with Lieut. Sommerville with his colors of black and yellow gracefully seated on her back, looked the perfection of a racer.

Mr. Fiddes' "Othello," a bright bay C. B., was to contest the race. His slightly arched neck and slender limbs seemed to be the very ideal of swiftness.

"'Proserpine' looks fresh and lively enough," remarked Mr. Fiddes to a friend; "do you think she will beat mine?"

"Nonsense, man; the mare is not up to much, and her appearance is the best of her I should say," he answered.

Fiddes imagined the thrill of joy he would feel if the Grange colors were lowered.

"I hate those Grange people, George," he said, addressing his companion; "they think such a mighty lot of themselves, and that young Sommerville puts on ever so much side; he thinks himself equal to a professional. I am sure he fancies he'll win. The whole of them are a conceited lot, and I should dearly like to see their downfall."

"Fiddes," said Capt. D'Oyley, coming up to where he was, "your colt looks like winning."

"Surely you don't think that he will stand the ghost of a chance against Miss Huntingdon's Arab," answered that gentleman with a sneer upon his lip and stroking his brown moustaches. "'Proserpine' looks in nicer racing condition."

"Oh! the little mare! She looks nice enough, and I can

scarcely say what a lot of money has been put on her," replied the Captain with an easy *nonchalance*.

"It's useless to ask if you are disposed to back the Arab against my colt," said Fiddes.

"Not a bit of it," returned D'Oyley, "if you have a fancy that way. I am sure Miss Huntingdon would be delighted to have a bet with you;" and he called to Lilian, who was near by.

"Certainly I shall be very glad," she replied. "What shall we say, Mr. Fiddes, to an even bet of ten thousand rupees?"

"Five thousand," replied Fiddes, "would be the more comfortable sum."

"Only five," said Lilian with a laugh; she had overheard part of his conversation with his friend.

"Well, I should not like to take an unfair advantage, you know," he answered.

Lilian laughed again and replied: "As you please. I did not give you credit for being so considerate."

She drew out of a little side pocket in her jacket a miniature betting book and a gold pencil case, and handed them to Capt. D'Oyley to book the wager. They then parted, Lilian and the Captain going back to their seats.

"What a cad that man is," remarked D'Oyley. "I should like to kick him."

"He seems so confident that his horse will win and brags about it openly," spoke Lilian; "did you notice how satirical he was?"

"The fool," said the Captain, "I hope he loses; it will serve him jolly well right."

At last there was a cry "They're off." It came first from the stand and was echoed round the course by the crowd, who were eager and keen to see the race. Lieut. Sommerville rode without exhibiting the least excitement, nor did the mare look at all as if she was tiring. "Proserpine" was going easily and kept up with "Othello" for a considerable time. "Othello" then thought it best to do his utmost, and being urged by his rider took up the running and came round the bend into the straight

leading and headed "Proserpine" by some lengths. Fiddes could scarcely take his eyes off his horse, and gave a grin of satisfaction, looking around and then straight at Capt. D'Oyley with a sneer upon his lip. If he expected to see a change in that gentleman's face he was disappointed. The Captain was far from excitable and showed no signs of anger or disappointment on his placid countenance. Karminie was the only one of the party who did show signs of restlessness, and asked Lilian if she thought the mare would succeed, to which Lilian replied that they would know the result in a short time.

Edward Sommerville now touched the mare with his spurs and used his whip freely, which rendered "Proserpine" nearly frantic; she went away with the speed of an arrow swiftly and surely; still Lieut. Sommerville found it a hard task to get up to "Othello," who to all appearances seemed the winner of the "Bettiah Cup;" then suddenly when it looked long odds on the C. B. colt Fiddes saw his horse swerve and in another moment "Proserpine" had won.

The next race was for the "Durbunga Cup," and Major Newcombe now led forward "Moonshine," who had been heavily backed against Col. P—'s "stud-bred." The Major sat on his rich dark chesnut, whose large head was so placed as to give him the appearance of being ewe-necked. The animal's forelegs were short and the arm muscular, but the slope and depth of girth, the full development of the loins and haunches, together with his springy step and compactness of form, brought to the experienced eye evidence of great powers both of speed and endurance. "Moonshine" would have to beat Col. P—'s "stud-bred" to win. This was not an easy matter, for the Colonel's horse had a good reputation and was known as a fast racer.

The Major looked quite the jockey as he placed himself on his horse's back. He was dressed in a short green jacket, striped with red, and a cap to match. Norman was to ride "Jim," and Mr. Frost, a young planter, to ride Sommerville's "Little One." Mr. Cairn's pony and several others were to compete.

The word "Go" was given by the starter, and "Moonshine," springing away with a bound like that of a lion, nearly dislocated his rider's arms in his impatience to get his head. It required all the Major's skill and strength to pull him in. There were three or four other horses besides "Moonshine" who also required careful handling. The pace that the horses adopted was anything but pleasing to the Major, for "Moonshine" became so excited by his desperate attempt to get away that he was rather blown and required easing to enable him to preserve his wind. The Colonel's horse meanwhile was going at an easy pace and keeping up with "Moonshine" in what appeared scarcely more than a canter. When past the corner, however, "Moonshine" decidedly improved, and his rider began to make play. The pace increased and the tender-hearted ones gradually dropped to the rear. Up to this time the Colonel's horse ran neck to neck with "Moonshine" for nearly half a mile; then "Moonshine" gained a lead of about half a length. This order was preserved till the stud-bred commenced to creep up again and tried to dispute the leadership with "Moonshine," who had now no wish to relinquish the post of honor, and the pace grew decidedly severe. Then the final struggle began. Both riders used their whips and spurs, and the horses were neck and neck. The excitement was growing painful, handkerchiefs were waved and the spectators shouted. Suddenly the Major's horse, propelled by some invisible power, shoots forward, beats the favorite on the post, and becomes winner of the "Durbunga Cup" among cheers and cries from the crowd.

It is not to be supposed that when both Major Newcombe and Lieut. Sommerville were winners of the first prizes that Norman would allow himself to be beaten and not succeed in securing the "Merchants' Cup" on pony "Jim." Mr. Frost also, who rode Edward Sommerville's "Little One" in the "Tom Thumb Stakes," secured a win after a fast hard-fought race.

There was great rejoicing after the races, and Mr. Huntingdon gave a large dinner to the planters, and other

gentlemen were asked to join in the repast. Lilian could afford to be extra generous with the five thousand rupees she had won from Mr. Fiddes. There was a race ball also given, where they all met and enjoyed themselves, and Sommerville asked young Frost down to Rowdypore to spend a week with him.

Lilian had brought her hounds and fox-terriers with her, and together with some of the gentlemen's dogs they had a good day's hunt after jackal. But all things must come to an end, and so did the Sonepore fair. The Huntingdons packed up their things and with their little party, their jockey, their horses, and dogs, made their way back to Calcutta and to the Grange.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ROWDYPORE.

ON their return from Sonapore to the Grange, the excitement being now over, Mr. Huntingdon thought it time to pay their deferred visit to the little cantonment station of Rowdypore, which is conveniently near Calcutta. The horses and dogs were sent ahead, and even Piggy was taken, much to the displeasure of Mrs. Jennings. Mr. and Mrs. Lancaster, who had been staying in Darjeeling since their marriage, would soon return and would spend a time with the Huntingdons. Signora Patellani was invited, and Mrs. Pry had also made up her mind to take Edith and stay there.

The principal buildings and sights of the station are the Soldiers' Institute, the—Factory, a column erected to the memory of the officers and men who fell in the Retreat of Cabul in the years 18—18—, an English Church at the corner of the road (where the clergyman holds military service on Sunday mornings), an officers' mess-house, a barrack square, a hospital, a cemetery, the butts and the old race course. There are also a number of dangerous unfenced tanks and great ditches which overflow during the rains, inundating parts of the station. Then there are miles all round of low level land converted into rice fields which are flooded during the rains. A detachment of a British Infantry Regiment, a few staff men, and some civilians constitute the residents of the station. Twice a week the band plays at the Institute, and now and again scratch performances are given by the soldiers.

The house that the Huntingdons occupied was Lilian's own property, called "Avenue House," taking its name from the road leading up to it. It was a fine commanding looking house with immense grounds, and overlooked the house occupied by the Ranfords.

Rowdypore at the best of times is a dull old hole, and if it were not for the constant booming in the Factory, it would be as silent as the grave. But the girls required rest, after the excitement they had lately gone through, and Mr. Huntingdon deemed this the most suitable spot for them to recreate in. The cold weather having now commenced the station looked its nicest. The only change that had taken place since Lilian drove in that morning in her tandem was that Lieut. Thornycliffe had clandestinely taken unto himself a wife, the daughter of a worshipper of Bacchus, who on learning of the event had brought his righteous indignation to bear upon the cooing doves, till the young Lieutenant suing for a transfer fled from Rowdypore, taking with him his wife, his goods, and chattels, and was relieved by Lieut. Bare-Glaise, who had just arrived from the hills. Mr. Huntingdon gave many entertainments, making Rowdypore as lively as it was in his power to do. Piggy finding the station so quiet, used to employ her time by wandering round the place and straying into gardens, digging up roots.

She often paid Mrs. Ranford a visit, making havoc among her flower-beds. Mrs. Ranford took a greater dislike than ever to Piggy and planned with her Ayah and Ram Ram to compass her death.

Signora Patellani was also that lady's aversion, and the Italian lady, finding this out, did her utmost to torment her adversary. She went out of her way by walking every evening as far as the railway station about the time that the Colonel come from office and Mrs. Ranford went in her barouche to bring him home. The Colonel made it a point to stop the carriage and offer Signora a seat, which she smilingly accepted saying that she thought it such a pretty walk that she never knew until too late that she had gone such a distance, and how very kind her friends were to bring her home.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE RACE FOR THE CUP.

MR. HUNTINGDON, accompanied by his daughter and niece, looked the picture of health and prosperity as he drove his team of greys along the Grand Trunk Road from Rowdypore, cutting across the Chowringhee Esplanade to the race course. Both the girls wore grey with red, the colors of "Crosspatch's" rider.

The race for the Viceroy's Cup had, for months, been looked forward to with much excitement by all lovers of racing. The only horse Lilian had fears about was "Moonshine," whom she considered the most prominent candidate "Crosspatch" would have to contend with, but he had broken down. It was well known that Lord G— had backed "Fenian" very heavily. Two of the grandest horses were to meet this year—Mr. Cairn's new purchase "Comet" and Lord G—'s Fenian, both English horses, from whom great things were expected. Besides these, there were "Queen Mab," a five-year-old (the property of a racing barrister in Calcutta) who had won many a race in her time and had carried off many a prize, and Mrs. Mail's "Nelly," a very speedy mare who contended with "Moonshine," Major Newcombe's horse, in the paperchase meet.

In the ring they were laying a shade of odds against each of the favorites, "Comet" and "Fenian"; four to one against "Queen Mab" and long odds bar three. Some of the crowd had a shot at "Crosspatch." There are always some who back on the off chance. "Crosspatch" being backed by his stable, coupled with his handsome appearance, made a good impression on many, although the queer expression of his eye (which plainly said I'll do as I feel inclined) stopped a number from putting their money on him.

"That's 'Crosspatch'! Miss Huntingdon's horse, that is being backed by Sommerville," one remarked. "The

Lieutenant will soon regret his action; why that's the very brute that was run in the paperchase this year," said another.

"Huntingdon paid quite a large sum of money for him, and he has a long pedigree," spoke Capt. D'Oyley, who was with the men and thought to himself that it was a fool's trick starting the horse at all. He would have kept the three-year-old for a big handicap, "but women will have their way," he thought, "and Lilian is no exception to her sex."

The betting became fast and furious, and even Col. Ranford was induced to have a little money on the event.

As soon as the flag fell "Nelly" sprang to the front and brought the rest for the first mile at a tremendous pace.

"The pull is nearly taken out of Fenian," remarked one of the spectators, "and Comet is not much better."

"Comet" however showed up and gained lead by a few lengths.

"He wins," said Lieut. Sommerville, "the brute, confound him."

Norman now exerted himself to the utmost; he had won many races and was savage to find himself getting beaten, especially after his confident predictions to Lilian.

"Crosspatch" is second," exclaimed Lilian as "Queen Mab" slackened pace. "Crosspatch" had passed "Nelly," and being urged on he dashed forward with a mighty rush and closed with "Comet." Then amid frantic yells and shouts rose a cry of "'Crosspatch' has won by a head."

Edward Sommerville's face never wore a happier or a brighter expression than it did on this auspicious occasion, nor did Norman ever feel more pleased than when Lilian drew him a cheque on the Bank of Elegance for a thousand rupees and made him a present of a diamond ring.

Lilian was wild with joy. When she reached home she patted and caressed the good old horse, and it did one's heart good to see how joyfully and affectionately he rubbed his head against his mistress's shoulder, showing that he could behave like a gentleman when he pleased and was not always the sulky brute "Crosspatch" his enemies had likened him to.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE ASSASSINATION OF PIGGY.

THE heart-rending cries of a pig freighted the air and its shrieks rang through the house. The whole party at "Avenue House" were seated on the large terrace in front overlooking the road, and were discussing the events of that day's races when the cries were heard.

Lilian was the only one who recognized the familiar cries of her favorite, and flew downstairs, Karminie following her and Mr. Huntingdon also at a distance behind. All their efforts to reach the spot in time failed; they had first to ascertain from where the screams proceeded, and when they at last arrived at the spot the deed had been committed and the assassins had fled. Lilian was the first who arrived on the scene and apparently saw her favorite weltering in her blood. The poor pig could scarcely be recognized. Stabbed and lying in the grass, she looked quite ghastly. Lilian threw herself beside the animal and tried to staunch the blood which was flowing freely and forming a pool around her and soiling her white cashmere dinner dress.

Capt. D'Oyley, who had been invited to dinner, and who had just arrived, joined her as she was running across the compound to get to the place where the poor murdered pig lay. The rest of the party came up later on and looked sadly at the poor animal lying there; even Mrs. Jennings wiped a tear from her eye, and Mr. Huntingdon was enraged at the thought of the dastardly deed which must have been instigated and paid for; for the assassins had apparently no object in killing the animal; they had left it where it lay and had made their escape.

Mrs. Ranford, in her excitement, came over from her house in order to satisfy herself of the reality of the scene. She wished to pretend that she knew nothing of what

had transpired, but Ram Ram having informed her that Piggy had been killed and the young ladies also (he had noticed a trap upset like the one Lilian had, containing two ladies, who were badly injured), the news was too much for Mrs. Ranford, and she could not control herself any longer. She hurried to the Huntingdons, and on arriving she found the girls safe, much to her chagrin, but she was in a measure pleased to find the pig dead. She was almost hysterical when she reached the spot where they were standing; the Colonel, who was also there, was surprised to see his wife in so peculiar a frame of mind as she laughed out saying "that brute is dead at last." Everyone of the party turned to look at her as they noticed the unfeeling remark, and it was only then that Lilian awakened from her grief, and for the very first time since her acquaintance with Mrs. Ranford she spoke to her in anger.

"Mrs. Ranford, I am sorry to say it, but I feel confident that this foul deed has been instigated by you. You have always disliked my pet, and you have now stooped to do a despicable act. I hope you are satisfied. I will not ask if you can reconcile so base a deed to your conscience, for you do not possess one, but I hope that you may be treated likewise and may meet with the same cruel fate."

Lilian then turned to her father faint and sick and asked him to have the pig removed and have it buried in the morning. Then she heard a rush behind the trees and saw some one running away. Capt. D'Oyley also noticed the figure, and recognizing it he gave chase, and called to Ranford and Sommerville (the latter had arrived a few minutes before) to help him in catching the fugitive, who in the meanwhile had gone to a pretty good distance; they all three chased him through the paddy fields, when they suddenly heard him shriek and fall. They ran up to the spot where he had already been pinned, and was covered by the huge figure of an animal. Ram Ram, for it was no other than he, kicked with all his force to free himself from his opponent, who was biting him most ferociously on every part of his body that it could get

a hold on. The brute, seeing the gentlemen come up, let go its hold to allow the victim to be captured by the Captain, who pushed him along until he took him back to the house.

The animal ran to Lilian and put up her forefeet on her and soiled her dress with mud. Lilian started and turned round, as she felt the weight of the animal against her and heard the welcome grunt of a pig. She knew but too well that it was not the dead but the living pig which belonged to her, for it was indeed Miss Piggy with the same strawberry mark behind her left ear which first took Lilian's fancy, and which was now distinctly seen in the clear moonlight. The assassins had mistaken the pig of a neighbouring dealer which was straying about the grounds of "Avenue House" for Piggy. The slain pig was large and white, but was decidedly an Indian pig, and on close examination there was a distinct difference between the two animals. Piggy had gone out in the early part of the day and had been straying through the paddy fields. She had just turned her footsteps home at the time Ram Ram was making his escape, and, in her hurry to get back had run against the youth, who finding his way impeded kicked her.

Piggy's English blood was roused; her bristles stood erect, and she avenged the insult far more severely than in the previous case of Mrs. Ranford. Ram Ram had been severely bitten, and his looks were as black as night. Soondree Ayah had also come on the scene, and when she noticed the state in which her boy was, she whispered something to Mrs. Ranford, which made that dame walk up to the Captain and say: "Capt. D'Oyley, please release the boy; he has had nothing to do with the affair."

Had the Captain shown signs of relenting, there was Edward Sommerville she would have to contend with, for he turned to the Captain saying: "D'Oyley, if you are tired of your charge, I will take him in hand."

He thereupon called to the chaprasses and gave him in charge, instructing them that they were not to release him without his orders.

Mrs. Ranford knew that the hour had arrived when all her dark deeds would be brought to light, for the lad would be sure to confess under very harsh treatment, and on the morrow, as expected, Ram Ram made a clean breast of it. The only matter which they were unable to solve was in connection with the anonymous letters. Lilian would no longer allow Piggy to go out by herself; when Miss Piggy wanted to walk she went with her mistress or had a man to escort her out. Col. Ranford was not a little surprised when he learned of his wife's perfidiousness. He knew her to be a vile-tempered and spiteful woman, but never for one moment did it enter his mind that she could ever stoop to anything so mean, and it made him more miserable to think that his acquaintance with the Huntingdons must now cease. The little light and happiness that he had in his poor life would now have to end, for they would never again receive Mrs. Ranford. The Colonel was bowed down with grief and shame for the conduct of the woman who had so disgraced him. He made up his mind to leave Rowdypore, and if possible to leave India altogether; but how could he tear himself away from Lilian without one word at parting; with no farewell? What had he done to deserve so cruel a fate? Was it for that one terrible mistake he had made in his youth, that one irreparable folly, that the whole of his life should be ruined?

He sat at his desk with his arms folded upon it and his head bent down through the night watches, and until morning dawn. He felt ill and worn, and yet he felt a longing to see Lilian once again. Yes, he would see her. She would know that it was for the last time; he would write her a few lines and beg her to meet him to say good-by.

Lilian, on hearing the whole of Ram Ram's confession, and finding that he was not so much to blame as Mrs. Ranford, gave him employment on her property and sent him away from Rowdypore, and in time he turned out a good servant and served his mistress faithfully, and even Soon-dree Ayah left Mrs. Ranford and went to her country.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE COLONEL'S REQUEST, &c.

"LILIAN, if you could but know how disgraced I feel through the miserable revelation of yesterday, I am sure you would sympathize with me. I know that acquaintance between us must now cease, that you could never receive her into your house again, and I would not ask it of you. I must leave Rowdypore, and India, too, if possible. Come and bid me good-by; say that you will meet me to-morrow at dusk near the large tank behind the bamboo bushes. Do not refuse me this, my pet, for I must see you. —EDWARD."

Lilian read the letter, which was given to her by Capt. D'Oyley, and she gave him the answer to take back to the Colonel: "I will be there to-morrow at 6 P.M."

Shortly after receiving the reply the Captain took his leave and Lilian went to her room to dress for dinner. She looked so unhappy that evening that Karminie and Edward Sommerville both noticed it and asked if she was ill.

"I am tired and out of sorts," she answered; and after dinner was over she left the drawing-room to take a stroll in the garden and went to Piggy's sty and took her favorite out to have a walk with her.

"I cannot understand Lilian at all, she seems so strange this evening," remarked Sommerville to Karminie.

"The agitation of yesterday has been too much for her," she replied. "Why don't you ask Mr. Frost to sing; he has a good voice and is obliging; he can play his own accompaniment or Edith will play for him."

Mr. Frost, as will be remembered, was the young man the Huntingdon party met at the Sonepore Races, and who rode the Lieutenant's pony. He was now at Rowdypore spending a time with Sommerville. He was asked to

sing, and accordingly gave them some comic songs, commencing with "Clementine" and ending with "Sweethearts and Wives." Edith and Karminie played a duet together. Karminie had been cross the whole day; it was the third mail in and no letter from Mr. Henry. His letters had decreased gradually; at first a letter came by every mail, then by every other mail, and now by every third or fourth mail. Karminie was nearly tired of his inconstancy, and was beginning to cease caring for him. At the conclusion of the duet and of a song from Edith, Lilian came in and brought Piggy with her to join in a game of whist should there be any inclined to play. Major Pierre of the Factory at Rowdypore, who was dining at "Avenue House" that evening, was a good whist-player and was glad of the opportunity to have a game. Lilian being disinclined for any diversion on the occasion gave Piggy to Mr. Huntingdon, who took her as his partner against the Major and Mrs. Pry. Piggy and Mr. Huntingdon won three rubbers successively; the Major with his partner succeeded in securing one double and a single; they then changed partners, Major Pierre taking Piggy and winning a treble.

Mr. Frost in the meanwhile was saying soft words to Edith, although in truth he had a soft corner in his heart for Karminie. Signora Patellani and Lilian were in earnest conversation, for the Italian lady had written a refusal to Mr. Capers in answer to his gushing proposal of marriage and was much affected by what she was obliged to write. Karminie and Sommerville played cat's cradle with a silken cord.

Capt. D'Oyley for a wonder was not spending the evening with the Huntingdons; he stayed with the Colonel, who locked himself up in his room and was talking seriously to him while the two smoked their cigars; and Mrs. Ranford on the other side of the house was writing notes in her diary.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE RENDEZVOUS.

PRECISELY at the hour appointed Col. Ranford walked up and down in the little space between the large unfenced tank and the clump of bamboo bushes which lay at the back of the house, waiting with impatience to hear the gentle tread, and to look, perhaps, for the last time upon the sweet face he longed to see. The intervening moments seemed hours to him, but at last he caught sight of a white figure, its head covered with a capeline. The fragile form, so well known to his accustomed eye, advanced towards him. Lilian was greatly excited when she arrived at the spot. It was with difficulty that she contrived to grant the Colonel this interview; there were so many persons at the house at the time that she found it almost impossible to escape unnoticed. It was just the hour that they would all be out for their ride and drive. He would, of course, be expected to be among them, otherwise Karmine, Edith or Signora would insist upon remaining with her, or worse still, perhaps, Mrs. Pry would have essayed to stay. Lilian had in her perplexity gone to Capt. D'Oyley, and asked him what she was to do, but not mentioning the place of rendezvous.

"Ted," she said to him, "help me in this. I must see him, and I can take no one else but you into my confidence."

"Poor girl," replied the Captain, "I feel for you; yes, I will do my best to see that this interview with Ranford may not be known to any but ourselves. You say there is to be a riding party; you must also go and so must I. When it is a quarter to six we shall leave them and ride back; you can say you are tired and wish to return, and I shall accompany you. We can ride back quickly, parting at the corner

where the road turns into "Avenue House," you going on straight and I taking the turn to Ranford's. When you get home be sure to change your dress and cover your head with a white shawl, for the moon will be rising and your white clothes will baffle recognition."

Lilian thanked Capt. D'Oyley warmly for his advice and acted on it. She made her excuses to the riding party on the plea of being tired and rode back in company with the Captain. She was very nervous on getting to the house; she changed her riding habit and hurriedly slipped on a white dress, covering her head with a white woollen cloud, and telling her ayah that she was going to look at Piggy, should she be enquired for. On going down she ran to the sty and thence proceeded to the spot where the Colonel awaited her. She came up to him with fear and trembling, for it was the first time she had acceded to a clandestine meeting. Col. Ranford drew her to him and took her into the recess of the trees which almost bordered the tank. The clear waters with the leaves of the lotus lying at her feet and the pale moonbeams playing on the waters thrilled her with pleasure, and yet there was a presentiment of coming evil which marred her joy.

It was nearly an hour since she had come out, and Lilian knew that she would be missed if she did not go in soon.

"Edward," she said, "I must go in now; it is late and I shall be missed. It is very hard for me perhaps never to see you again. What happiness does my wealth bring me after all when I feel my life a blank? I have tried to be brave, to bear up for your sake, but I cannot endure this any longer. Oh! Edward, what am I to do?"

He strained her to him in answer; he knew that they would have to part whatever he or she might say to the contrary. He kissed her; it was a long entrancing kiss; no sobs broke forth from her. She clung to him, pale and trembling, sick and faint at heart; the hour for parting had come. Lilian felt that nothing could compensate her for the loss of the man whom she loved.

Neither spoke in this their last farewell, but a fiendish laugh, a wild yell, broke upon their ears, and they distinctly heard the words: "I have caught them. I knew I would: and so, Capt. D'Oyley, you thought to keep me away by leading me to the wrong portion of the grounds; but I have found them for myself; now what have you to say about your saintly Miss Granville?"

Mrs. Ranford (for it was she, as the reader has already guessed) rushed towards them with her hand uplifted; she did not notice in her agitation whether it was Karminie or Lilian whom she intended for her victim.

The Colonel put Lilian behind him and told her to flee, but she would not; she still clung to him; she would brave it all instead of running away like a coward.

"Woman, you are mad, stand back," he exclaimed to his outraged wife as she rushed forward to either strike or to tear them to pieces; but this was avoided by the Captain, who darted forth, taking a mud wall which lay on the other side and at the back of where Lilian and Ranford stood; he threw himself between them and Mrs. Ranford, pushing her back with his arm roughly in his excitement and not noticing what was behind her and the danger which lay there. He heard a splash and a cry from Lilian's lips. He turned to see what it was, but only saw the waters close over something.

The Colonel said: "She has fallen in," and he threw off his boots and plunged into the tank to save the woman who had ruined his life. Capt. D'Oyley did the same; he dived several times, and at last with Col. Ranford's help he succeeded in extricating her from the weeds of the tank in which she got entangled. Lilian was running to the house to call for help when she met Karminie and Edward Sommerville. They had come out to look for her, as Lilian expected, when it had got late. They had first gone to the sty as instructed by the ayah, but not finding her there they searched about the grounds until Sommerville saw the end of her white dress. Nearing the spot they indistinctly saw two figures; they then heard voices and a cry from Lilian,

and were hurrying forward when she met them. She directed them to the place of accident. Mr. Huntingdon and Mr. Lancaster, followed by the ladies, were also making for the spot. They were met by Lilian, who explained what had happened, upon which Daisy went back to the house for brandy and smelling salts.

Lilian was the only one from the house who did not return to the scene, for she felt too ill to go back and to hear Mrs. Ranford's reproaches when she came to her senses again.

The Colonel and the Captain had dragged her out of the water and had laid her on the grass, while Norman went for the Doctor. Mr. Huntingdon insisted upon taking Col. Ranford and Capt. D'Oyley in to change their clothes. Daisy returned with the restoratives, and they tried their utmost to restore Mrs. Ranford to consciousness, but failed. They anxiously awaited the Doctor's arrival. He at length arrived—a young man of about thirty with a goodly face, the Junior Doctor of the regiment. He knelt down, opened the lady's dress and examined her heart. Life was extinct; she must have been dead some time, probably as soon as she fell into the water. He took out her watch from her pocket and opened it; the dial hand pointed to a quarter past seven. She was removed to the house, while the young surgeon went away to bring with him his superior officer. The two medical men gave their verdict death from drowning and heart disease.

On Mrs. Ranford's returning from her drive that evening she found the Colonel had gone out. She enquired from the servants if they knew which road he had taken, and learned from them that he had gone through the lane at the back of her house. She then went into his room to see if she could get a sight of him from the window, when the fragment of a letter with the corner burnt lying on the ground caught her eye. There were not more than two or three words visible, but enough to show her that he had an appointment with some one, and her mind came to the conclusion that it was with

Karminie. She had seen Lilian riding with Capt. D'Oyley when she was out driving, so it could be no one but Karminie who had stopped at home to meet the Colonel. She went to the window overlooking the lane to try and get a glimpse of them. She saw a figure dressed in white near the bamboo bushes. She ran downstairs and came upon Capt. D'Oyley, who was on his way to his room to change his riding clothes. He noticed how excited she was and asked what had happened; she then told him where she was going. The Captain knew it would be useless to make any attempt at thwarting her, so he followed.

On going to the house he tried to guide her to the wrong road, but she had seen them and knew her way to the spot, and went there before the Captain could run round to give them timely warning; but although he ran fast he got there only in time to witness the row and interfere in it. The road Mrs. Ranford took was a short cut and hence the catastrophe. Mrs. Ranford's body was removed to the Colonel's house. Mr. Huntingdon, Mr. Lancaster and Capt. D'Oyley kept watch by turns through the night.

Col. Ranford had locked himself up in his room and Lilian was ill all night. Karminie had told her of Mrs. Ranford's death, and it made her very nervous. Mrs. Pry and Daisy walked over to Col. Ranford's house to see the body dressed and laid out, and Norman was sent to town to convey the Colonel's orders for the funeral. The burial took place the next evening.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MANY CHANGES.

LILIAN continued ill for some days; her system had received a great shock, and the doctor said she required rest and quiet. •

Col. Ranford removed to the Chummery after the funeral. He had not seen Lilian since the evening of the accident, but had sent twice to enquire after her health.

Edward Sommerville knew he would have to ask for an interview with Lilian; that he would have to tell her that he was unwittingly the witness of a scene between Col. Ranford and herself, which was not very flattering to himself. It made his mind very uneasy to speak of disagreeable things. He now felt certain that Lilian did not care for him, and he felt that he ought not to stand in the way of her future happiness. Ranford was a widower, and all would go right. Lilian might not like to tell him that she preferred Ranford to himself. She might think it mean on her part when she was worth so much money to deprive him of his expectations. He would have to see her and tell her what he knew, and then speak to Mr. Huntingdon, who was also very uncomfortable over the sad affair. Lilian did not appear at the inquest held over the death of Mrs. Ranford, but she gave her deposition to the Magistrate.

Mr. Huntingdon was grieved to think that his daughter did not take him into her confidence. He would ~~have~~ to wait until she was well, and then speak to her.

"Poor girl, she has been sorely tried," he thought to himself, but what would Sommerville say and Mrs. Mowbray think if the engagement were broken off; this seemed likely to happen. As, however, Capt. D'Oyley was aware of the meeting beforehand, as he had mentioned at the inquest, Mr. Huntingdon supposed that there could not have been

anything so very secret after all ; it may have been only a jealous freak of Mrs. Ranford's. Mr. Huntingdon contented himself with this belief until Lilian confessed to him the truth. He then blamed himself for throwing the Colonel and his daughter too much into each other's society during their stay at Simla.

As soon as Lilian had sufficiently recovered and had spoken to her father, she sent for Edward Sommerville to her little sitting room, and motioned him to a seat next to her. She was still very nervous, but she told him everything from the beginning of her acquaintance with Col. Ranford, his confession and her meeting him on the day of the fatal accident. She said : "I tried to school myself not to care for him, to forget him. I knew it to be wrong, but I could not help it. I can scarcely expect you to forgive me, Edward, for treating you so badly but I am still willing to keep my contract, yet I do not think you would care to have me marry you only in honor and without love, and I think you are fond of Karminie, who, I am sure, returns your love. I had made up my mind before this meeting took place to speak to you after Col. Ranford left Rowdypore, and to leave it to you to marry me or not. If Karminie will accept you, I shall try and add to your income if you will allow me. I do not mean to insult you, Edward," she hastily said and caught his hand as he rose in anger to leave the room. "Edward, I am very unhappy ; do not be cross with me. Perhaps after all Col. Ranford may never come near me again."

"He is sure to come," the young man replied ; "you have both suffered, and I must not stand in the way of your happiness. Perhaps it is best that it has so happened ; we might not have lived happily if you had married me while you cared for another. I shall apply to go on active service."

"Oh ! Edward, this indeed must not be. I really thought you preferred Karminie ; why not marry her ?" Lilian said.

"I am not so anxious to transfer my affections and to get re-engaged," he answered.

It was a cruel remark, and he was sorry for it ; he was not pleased to find that Lilian had detected his secret liking for Karminie, and he felt bitter at Lilian's confession that she loved Ranford. It was he who had brought Col. Ranford to the house, and it was his friend who had superseded him in the affections of the girl who was his affianced bride ; yet in his own heart Sommerville was not sorry for the turn that affairs had taken. He then left Lilian's room and sought Mr. Huntingdon, and told him that Lilian and he had released each other by mutual consent. Mr. Huntingdon offered no word of comment. He remembered that Lilian's mother had many lovers, but withal she loved him most. He never thought Lilian was capable of strong passions ; but alas ! his experience of women was not extensive.

It was quite a fortnight after the death of his wife that Col. Ranford called upon the ladies at "Avenue House." He had been twice to Mr. Huntingdon's library to see him during that time, and he now asked to see Lilian.

Mr. Huntingdon conveyed the message to his daughter, who consented to the interview, and Col. Ranford was shown into her *boudoir*. There was not the least change visible in his manner or bearing as Lilian looked up from where she was seated and came forward to greet him. A faint flush dyed her cheek as she addressed him, saying : "Col. Ranford, I am indeed glad to see you again." His manner seemed composed, the old fidgetiness was gone ; he led her back to her seat and answered by asking if for the future he was to be Col. Ranford to her.

"I know you are ill and nervous still, dear girl, and it is too soon after what has occurred for me to speak as I may wish to, but now I have every hope, Lilian, that you will not change towards me. Sommerville tells me that you have released him."

"Yes, we have had an explanation. I told him everything that he ought to know, and he has acted very nobly," Lilian answered.

"He is indeed a fine fellow," spoke the Colonel. "When

he was Adjutant in my regiment before he changed into the B. I., it would have been difficult to find a nicer man. I am sorry that we should have turned out rivals; but I hope that in time we shall be good friends again."

"He likes you very much still," Lilian said, "and I fancy he has a soft corner in his heart for Karminie, so that after all he will not be inconsolable for my loss."

"I hope not," he answered. "Karminie is very nice; but what about Henry? How does she propose getting rid of him?"

"He has been playing truant, and I fancy Karminie has tired of him," Lilian replied. "I think Edith has also made a conquest of the little Doctor, and it may lead to a marriage."

"Of whom, Carte Spangles? No, never; I am sure you are mistaken. I thought he liked you better," the Colonel said.

"Perhaps," answered Lilian, "he does not find me as nice as Edith, and as Mr. Appleton is taking so long to make up his mind, Edith thinks it wiser to encourage the Doctor."

Col. Ranford reluctantly took his leave of her, and Lilian made her appearance in the drawing-room that evening.

Mrs. Mowbray was far from pleased when she heard that Lilian's engagement with her son had been broken off. She had a presentiment that he would fall in love with Karminie, and she was not far wrong in her conjecture, for it was not two months after the change affairs had taken place that he offered his hand and heart to that young lady, and the day of their marriage was fixed. It was about that time too that Col. Ranford asked Mr. Huntingdon to give him his daughter, and he sued for an early marriage.

The day fixed for Lilian's wedding with the Colonel was six months after the death of the late Mrs. Ranford, and Mr. Huntingdon's advice was acted upon, for the two weddings, Karminie's and Lilian's, were to take place on the same day and at the same time.

Major Newcombe was greatly surprised to hear of Mrs. Ranford's death, and hurried to Rowdypore immediately to give Lilian a timely warning about Ranford's fascinations. Little did poor Cliff think that his advice would be neglected. Lilian put her arms round him, kissed him as she always did, and said: "It's too late, Cliff."

Clifford Newcombe felt that Col. Ranford's work had already been done, and that no interference of his would do the slightest good. So he returned to Calcutta bearing his burden.

As Lilian had prophesied, Dr. Carte Spangles, M.B., proposed for Edith, and was accepted, and Mrs. Pry was in her seventh heaven of delight to find that, although she had angled hard for a civilian or an officer for her daughter, she had at last got not either of those, but still a military man.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE TWO WEDDINGS.

SIX months later a double wedding took place at the Grange. Karminie was wedded to Lieut. Sommerville and Lilian to Col. Ranford.

Prettier brides than the cousins made it would be difficult to find. They were both dressed alike in *crème* satins (their trains being caught up with diamond stars), long flowing lace veils and wreaths of orange blossoms. There was a goodly array of bridesmaids and flower girls, while both the bridegrooms were in full uniform.

The marriages took place in St. Peter's Church, and the band of the — Regiment played.

The weddings were in the afternoon, and the cake and champagne were served in a large pavilion in the garden.

Mr. Huntingdon gave his daughter away, whilst Mr. Lancaster acted the part of father to Karminie. Lilian's gift to her cousin was a pretty little house in Rowdypore, and Karminie's present to Lilian was a set of china. Among the many gifts to the girls was Major Newcombe's; his present to Karminie was a Cashmere shawl, and to Lilian a massive gold ring set with pearls.

Clifford Newcombe felt too dejected, and did not attend the wedding. Daisy, like most persons, was superstitious, and did not like the idea of the pearls; they foreboded sorrow, she said to her husband, who laughed at the thought. Such an idea never entered poor Cliff's head; he looked for something pretty and simple, and thought no present more suitable than the one he selected.

Col. Ranford took Lilian to Simla for their honeymoon trip, and Karminie went with her husband to Dr. and Mrs. Mowbray's at Naini Tal. Mrs. Mowbray, although not pleased at the change of affairs, still she

did not forget her duty, and asked her son and daughter to her house. She was unable to attend the wedding, but she sent the bride a handsome present.

Karminie's grandmother increased her allowance after her marriage, and gave her twice as much as she had hitherto done. So what with a free house to live in, the fifty thousand rupees Edward Sommerville won on "Cross-patch's" success, two hundred a month from Dr. Mowbray, and Mr. Huntingdon's present to her of ten thousand rupees which he had promised Karminie at the time Mr. Henry proposed, the Lieutenant and his wife did pretty well. No persuasion would induce him to take up a staff appointment. He was a gallant officer, and would be sure to win glory on the battlefield, as Col. Waller predicted.

No one who knew Col. Ranford six months ago would take him to be the same man ; he was so thoroughly changed ; his dream of love had been realized, and he was happy ; he almost forgot the hideous nightmare that had fettered him for so many years ; he felt himself young again. If it were not for his slightly grizzled mustache and his few grey hairs he might have passed for ten years younger than his age.

Edith married Dr. Carte Spangles, and flirted in her quiet way with the unmarried officers in the regiment, and Mrs. Pry went to Sydney to pass the remainder of her days in a nicer climate.

Signora Patellani has not yet changed her widowhood, but she is on the eve of doing so, as our next chapter will prove. As Mr. Henry had left off writing to Karminie, neither she nor Mr. Huntingdon informed him of the change of arrangements.

The two brides were coming back to the Grange on their return to Calcutta. Lilian and the Colonel would remain with Mr. Huntingdon at the Grange, but Edward Sommerville and Karminie were to be guests for a week.

Colonel and Mrs. Harcourt kept their promise of coming from Peepulpore for Lilian's wedding.

Daisy and Lancaster were staying in lodgings, for they were about to leave for Europe. Clifford Newcombe paid

his respects to Lilian on her return home ; he had schooled himself to the interview, and with his strength of will, had succeeded. Lilian had told the Colonel of her cousin's love for her, and he was sorry for him.

"My pet," he said, "how could he help loving you ; we must always be friendly to him, Lilian, for he too has suffered."

Lilian put her arms round her husband's neck and laid her head fondly on his shoulder. "How happy I am, Edward ; I could not wish for any greater happiness than to have married you."

"My darling," he answered, holding her in a close embrace, "God has been good to us at last."

'Humph !' grunted Piggy, who had walked into the room, and was seated close to her mistress. "You might take notice of me, I think, instead of having all the love-making to yourselves."

The Colonel and his wife laughed out, and each gave Piggy a hug, who wagged her stump of a tail and cut capers on the carpet.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A VISITOR.

THE little party were again re-assembled at the Grange. Col. Ranford had resumed his work at office, and Lieut. Sommerville had gone to Rowdypore to make arrangements for himself and his wife to live there.

Lilian was out visiting, and Mr. Huntingdon, as usual, was locked up in his study. Karminie feeling lazy was having a siesta in the green-room. She had been sleeping some time, and had now half-awakened at the sound of voices close to her. Raising herself to see from where they came, she noticed her uncle in conversation with a gentleman who was advancing towards her. The visitor was not unknown to her. Starting at the familiar face and blushing vividly she rose, while the gentleman quickly came forward to greet her.

"I am so glad to see you again, dear girl," he exclaimed; and regardless of Mr. Huntingdon's presence he put his arm round her slim figure and kissed the face which was all covered with blushes.

"But indeed, Arthur," spoke Karminie, "you really must not kiss me."

At the same time a head appeared within the door, and a voice called out: "Hulloa, Henry, I must say that it's more than a fellow can stand to see his wife made love to by some one else."

Poor Mr. Henry was sorely perplexed at this speech, and Mr. Huntingdon, who was taken aback by the scene, could do nothing but look on.

"Well, uncle," continued the young man, "I never thought you would give countenance to such a flirtation." "Henry," he added, giving that gentleman his hand, "I ought to knock you down for so great an insult to me;

but I dare say Karminie and you would like to go into explanations, so we shall leave you to yourselves." Whereupon he linked his arm within that of Mr. Huntingdon, and both gentlemen walked out of the room.

When Karminie and Mr. Henry were left together, they both felt at a loss for words. Mr. Henry looked at Karminie and waited for her explanation. Poor girl, she felt like a criminal seated there under her old lover's cold gaze, and she almost wished she had now waited until his return from Europe rather than have to give him satisfactory answers to his questions.

Mr. Huntingdon would have gladly saved his niece the pain of explaining her conduct had he been prepared for Mr. Henry's arrival.

He was taken by surprise when the card was brought to him in his study, and on coming out of the room he saw Mr. Henry standing in the vestibule, so that he had no alternative but to take him upstairs and into the green-room, where he unexpectedly found Karminie taking her siesta.

Karminie was not entirely to blame for her conduct towards Mr. Henry. He had left her freedom of choice during his absence, and had ceased corresponding with her of late. She had suffered much at his departure, and even at this moment the recollection rushed upon her, that it was in that very room, only a short year ago, that she cried until her heart nigh broke. She raised her eyes to him, and he noticed tears on the lashes which made Mr. Henry's heart soften.

"Arthur," she said at length, "I wish you had not left off writing to me. I should have been better able to bear our separation then, but when mail after mail brought no letter from you I thought you had ceased to care for me, and I was very unhappy; will you forgive me, dear Arthur?"

Mr. Henry was touched, and he took her hand in his and said: "It was partly my fault, Karminie; I ought not to have left off writing. I was not long at home when I went abroad, and then thought I should not write again as it was getting so close to my return to India; but we will be friends still, dear girl, won't we?"

"Oh! yes," she replied with a little disappointment in her tone, for it was beyond Karminie's comprehension to believe that an impassioned lover could ever turn into the calm and placid friend. Mr. Henry was impulsive, and on first seeing Karminie he fell desperately in love with her pretty face, but his was not a lasting love. On going to Europe and after a time the naughty little man took another fancy. He was honorable, but alas! though not altogether faithless, he was weak. He did not declare his love to the other lady or tell her of his engagement in India. He intended to see Karminie again, and hear what she had to say to it; perhaps she would be glad to release him from his engagement to her; but when he came to India and saw Karminie again, the idea vanished from his mind, and the old infatuation returned. Had Karminie been still unmarried he would have married her, and would doubtless have proved a true and good husband to her. His was not a passionate nature to love madly or hate with deadly hatred; it was too icy a nature for that, yet he was disappointed to find her married. He liked pretty women, and a prettier face than Karminie's, he owned to himself, it would be difficult to find, and regret entered his heart when he knew he had lost her. He was still more surprised to find that she was married to Edward Sommerville, for he knew the Lieutenant to be engaged to Lilian, and how came it to be that Lilian was married to Ranford. Karminie had to explain this and to mention Mrs. Ranford's death, and Mr. Henry smiled, for, although he pretended to be very unobservant, he had drawn his own conclusions on the night of the Ball when he saw the Colonel with Lilian.

Edward Sommerville was seated out in the verandah all the time that his wife was talking to Mr. Henry. He wished Henry had not made his appearance so soon after their marriage, although he did not fear him as a powerful rival, still it was an uncomfortable feeling to have his wife's old lover turn up when he was least wanted.

Lilian drove in, and on seeing a brougham waiting near

the portico, enquired who had come. She was surprised to hear it was Mr. Henry, and hurried upstairs to see him. She entered the drawing-room; and on hearing voices in the verandah recognized them to be those of her father and Edward Sommerville. She went forward to meet them, and in a few words Mr. Huntingdon explained everything.

Karminie on hearing Lilian's voice now came out with Mr. Henry and joined them. Sommerville looked up on his wife's entrance, and noticed a sad expression on her countenance, and Mr. Henry looked grave. He did not stay long after accosting Lilian, and he was scarcely a week in Calcutta when he had to rejoin his appointment at one of the dullest and jungliest stations on the E. B. S. Railway line. He was not long there, for with his usual luck he got into the Bengal Secretariat, and later on proved himself to be one of the ablest civilians in the Presidency. Mr. Henry was, like most clever men, a little eccentric. Anyhow he strove hard to bring himself to the front, and in a manner he did at last succeed.

Signora Patellani was still a widow; she had several offers, but had rejected them all until she received the offer of a French Count whom she had known on the Continent years ago; he was Le Comte Serre de Valmont, a Captain in the French Army, and a man of noble family.

In his youth he must have been a handsome man, for he still had traces of good looks, and was perfect in ease and grace of manner. The Count had proposed for Signora Lucretia when she was quite a girl and he a subaltern in the army, but her uncle would not consent to their union, for the young officer was poor, and had nothing but his pay to depend upon. He was in better circumstances now, for on the death of his uncle he came in for vineyards in Bordeaux, and had only come to India in order to renew his offer of marriage to Signora.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MR. & MRS. KELLER.

THE little house that Lilian had purchased for her cousin at Rowdypore was called "Karmine-ville" after the new owner. Lilian and the Colonel often paid the station a visit, now that the recollection of the miserable tragedy at Avenue House had passed away. Rowdypore had been the scene both of pain and of happiness to Lilian. She let out Avenue House to a Chummery, for she could not make up her mind to go there again. Mr. Noodle, whom we have nearly forgotten, was still toiling away as a sub-accountant in the Bank of Elegance. He was much cut up at Edith's marrying the Doctor instead of waiting for him. It was a standing rule in the bank that no assistant was allowed to marry until he drew an income which the directors thought adequate to support his position.

Little Mr. Frost has left the factory, and is now an assistant in a mercantile firm; and in recollection of the old days at Avenue House he still sings "Clementine" of an evening.

Sir Lawrence Howatson has been transferred to Calcutta, and is as happy as possible in a large city where he lives in style. He took a prominent part in most things, and was ambitious enough to expect some day to be at the head of the Church of Rome.

The very hot months of this tropical climate have given way to the mild cold weather of the Christmas season.

Our story commenced with incidents which occurred three years ago. The course of events has brought our readers to the end of 1886.

Keller, who, it will be remembered by the readers of "HOW WILL IT END," had married Hildegard Reissiger, has returned to India with his wife after many years'

absence, and they are staying at the Grange until they can find suitable accommodation for themselves. Hildegard Reissiger has grown to be a fine woman. She has the typical German face, light blue eyes and blonde hair. Lilian had only once met the Reissigers in Germany during her visit to the Continent. Mr. Gustav Reissiger retired to Germany with his wife after the death of his brother Ludwig. Cressence, Hildegard's younger sister, is also married, and is staying with their parents.

It was quite a treat to Mr. Huntingdon to see old faces again, and he was very glad to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Keller to the Grange. He had hoped that Mrs. Mowbray would be able to come, but this for the present seemed an impossibility. Keller, too, was changed from the stripling we last saw him to the staid married man. He has no children. Lilian asked Karminie to spend a couple of days with her to meet the Kellers. Both girls were looking over the daily papers, when Lilian was the first to read aloud from the Official Gazette, "Mr. A. Henry, C.S., is granted special leave for six months."

"I wonder what makes him take leave again," said Lilian; "he has not been back from England even a year."

"Perhaps he is going home to be married," replied Karminie. "I heard Mr. Finney say that he had an idea that Henry was engaged."

"Finney is a conceited idiot," exclaimed Lilian; "surely Mr. Henry would have mentioned it; and how could it be, when he was sweet upon you then; I will write and tell him of the rumour and find out for myself."

"I should not trouble myself about him," answered Karminie; "he is not worth it, and it does not concern us. I daresay he will marry and take a fancy to some other woman a week after his marriage—not meaning of course to be faithless."

Karminie had heard little tales from Mr. Finney about her old admirer which had been rumoured at the Club, and she was inclined to believe a great deal of what she had heard.

But Lilian would not be dissuaded, so she wrote at once to Mr. Henry telling him what she had heard. Mr. Henry in answer to Lilian's note contradicted the rumour, and added that he would be in town soon and would call. When he did so, Karminie had returned to Rowdypore, which prevented her seeing him. Six months later Mr. Henry returned to India married.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MRS. CARTE SPANGLES ENTERTAINS HER FRIENDS.

EDITH had lived so secluded a life with her mother that she now thought it time for re-action.

The old lady, Mrs. Pry, had made over some thousands of rupees to the Doctor as Edith's marriage portion, and Edith induced her husband to give her three thousand to spend in gaieties, so Edith's first ball was given in X'mas week.

Col. and Mrs. Ranford and Mr. Huntingdon were invited to it, and received as many blank invitations as they cared to have to fill in for their friends. Major Newcombe was also invited and went. The Doctor, with the permission of the commanding officer, had the band of his regiment to play, and the Ball turned out quite a success.

Edith and Karminie together gave a picnic a week after the Ball, when the whole party drove to a babu's garden known by the name of the Seven Tanks. The weather was thoroughly enjoyable; it was the beginning of January, 1887, and the year of Her Majesty's Jubilee, one of the grandest events India has to boast of for many a day. It was kept up in Calcutta on the 16th and 17th of February, with fireworks and illuminations. The whole of Old Court House Street and Government Place, the Esplanade, the large Firms, the Telegraph Office, the Indian Museum, the High Court, the Town Hall and other buildings were in a blaze of light.

Signora Patellani had married the Count de Valmont, and was returning to France with her husband.

Summer came round again, and with it the usual exodus of officials and their office establishments to the hills, but Col. Ranford had to stay behind as Assistant Secretary in charge of the few clerks in his office who usually stay in Calcutta to do routine duties.

He tried to persuade Lilian to go to the hills till the coming winter, for he knew her health would not stand the

climate, but Lilian was firm in her resolve not to leave her husband much as she would have liked the change. She never denied him a single pleasure, and took interest in all he did. Col. Ranford was very fond of playing at football, and even, when he thought himself unfit for that sort of thing, he watched the matches on the old cricket ground. Edward Sommerville always played; it was a game he was passionately fond of at College. There were others in his regiment who were good players too.

Lieut. Betts was considered a crack player, and had often distinguished himself by his speed at Sandhurst. Carlton and Hilson of the Corps were also exceedingly good. The matches played on the grounds attracted a large number of spectators, and interested all present. Lilian always accompanied her husband and took an interest in the play. Edith's special favourite was Lieut. Bare-Glaise, Assistant Superintendent of the factory. Lieut. Bare-Glaise was juvenile in his taste, and had the same likes as Edith in respect of *bon bons*, Italian cakes and sweets, which he always shared with Edith. The young Lieutenant was rather nice-looking; he was slight in figure and a blonde. He rode, drove and played polo, and exerted his utmost to please Edith, who was of a flippant disposition and loved attention. Edith and he used to go for long rides across country, while the Doctor was setting a fractured bone or taking off the limb of a soldier.

Dr. Carte Spangles was glad at first to find that his wife had the Lieutenant to be her constant escort, and thought it very kind of his friend to give up so much of his time on his wife's account, but meddlesome folks at Rowdypore roused the medical man's jealousy, and latterly, instead of his being glad to welcome his friend, he scowled at him; his wife noticed this, and did not know what to make of it. Poor Edith would have gone to Karminie with her troubles had she been there, but Lieut. Sommerville had got his Captaincy, and had gone with his wife to live at the Fort. She had no alternative now but to bear her sorrow, or to tell the young Lieutenant, and Edith was not a woman to keep her troubles to herself.

With many blushes and tears she told Lieutenant Bare-Glaise that she could not understand her husband of late ; he seemed so strange. " Bertie, I wish you would ask him for me, dear, good, Bertie," said Edith imploringly.

" I ask him, Edith," answered the Lieutenant ; " he will fly down my throat."

But Edith was bent upon persuading him to speak to the Doctor for her, and in this she succeeded.

" I could never ask Claude," added Edith. " I know what my husband is when he gets into a temper. I am so glad you have promised to do it for me ; you have taken such a load off my mind."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE MAJOR'S ADVICE.

LIEUT. BARE-GLAISE was perplexed when he got home that day as to how he should keep his promise to Edith by asking the Doctor about his strange conduct towards himself and Mrs. Spangles. Dr. Spangles, although an old friend of his, would naturally think him very impertinent. The idea of how he should execute his commission neatly and without giving offence gave him cause for much thought. He scarcely spoke the whole of dinner time, his mind being engrossed with his own reflections, and Major Pierre, with whom he was staying, wondered what had caused the Lieutenant to be so taciturn. After dinner he found the young man pacing up and down the sitting-room in a brown study.

Major Pierre grew uncomfortable about his friend, and at last ventured to address him.

"What is the matter, Glaise?" enquired the Major. "I hope nothing is wrong with you."

"Oh! no, Pierre," he answered.

"But, dear me! man, you seem most peculiar to-night," returned Major Pierre. "If you are in trouble and would like my advice, I am sure I shall be very happy to give it to you."

"Thanks," he replied, "I am afraid, though, advice can't do much good for me."

He then sauntered up to the window, and the Major heard him exclaim: "Hang it all! I wish I had not promised Edith to do this. Confound the tongues of these Rowdypore folk; they will always concern themselves about that which ought not to interest them."

The Major thought the words very strange, and he looked serious. Although Major Pierre was a man who was

as reserved and as cold as his own name, he was not a bad sort of fellow, and was known to do his best to help his fellow creatures if he could only see his way.

The Major thought in this instance that he really ought to give his friend some good counsel. Lieut. Bare-Glaise was young, and it was rare for young men like him not to do very foolish things, so he ventured another remark: "Glaise, I overheard what you just now said."

"The devil you did," ejaculated the young Lieutenant, not overpleased to learn that his *chef* had heard him.

"Yes," continued the Major, "and although I am not a man to interfere with any one, I hope you won't think it impertinence on my part in renewing my offer to do what I can to help you out of any trouble you might have got into. I feel distressed about you; do tell me what it is."

The young man turned his face toward his friend, who noticed the troubled look upon it.

He then told the Major what he had on his mind; he knew his *chef* to be trustworthy, so he feared nothing in telling him of his fears.

"It's a queer thing to ask a man why he should have grown cold to his wife," at length remarked the Major. "I do not see my way to your doing so without giving him offence."

"That's just what I feel," answered Glaise, "but what am I to do?"

"Why not let matters be as they are," advised his friend.

"I have promised Mrs. Spangles to speak to her husband, and I must do it now," replied the Lieutenant. "Besides it's so absurd for a man to get so wretchedly jealous of a fellow just because he happens to take his wife a few cakes now and again, and to escort her during her rides."

"Well, of course, it is absurd when you come to think of it," was the answer, "and I daresay if Spangles knew what it is he would see the absurdity himself."

"Now candidly tell me, Pierre, would you be jealous if I acted in the same manner towards your wife?" enquired Glaise.

The Major laughed; the idea was so ridiculous to fancy that starchy Mrs. Pierre would sit with a green youth eating Italian sweets and flirting mildly; really it was too absurd.

"I think it would be best for you to see Mrs. Pierre," replied he, "and judge for yourself if there is cause for such a remark. If you are really determined to speak to Spangles, I should advise you to meet him when he comes out of the hospital, and ask him to walk with you and tell him that his wife is very unhappy at his coldness towards her, and that you are also much grieved to notice that his behaviour to you now is not the same as it used to be; see what he has to say, and then tell him really what it all is, and you will find that it will all come right, and that he will like you all the better for it.

The Major's advice was sound, and his young friend acted upon it. The next morning he made it a point to meet the Doctor as he was coming out of hospital after he had seen his patients, and he asked him to walk with him up the road, when he told him all that had to be told, and regained the good opinion of the medical man. He was invited to dinner in the evening along with the Major.

Edith never spent a more enjoyable evening than she did on this occasion. The gentlemen were smoking in the dining-room which adjoined the rose-tinted drawing-room, and they could hear Edith run her fingers over the keys of the piano and gently sing:—

"On a tree by a river a little tom tit
Sang Willow, tit-willow, tit-willow!
And I said to him Dicky bird why do you sit
Singing Willow, tit-willow, tit-willow?
Is it weakness of intellect birdie I cried,
Or a rather tough worm in your little inside?
With a shake of his poor little head he replied,
"Oh! Willow, tit-willow, tit-willow."

The Major could scarcely repress a smile when he entered the room. He felt satisfied with the good he had done in turning peacemaker, and he was warmly thanked by both the Doctor and the Lieutenant for his kindly interference which resulted in so much good.

CHAPTER XL.

A WINTER IN CALCUTTA.

WHAT a contrast between summer with its heat, its dullness and its emptiness, and winter with its bracing weather, its varied round of pleasures, balls, parties, theatres, circuses, and races, its influx of visitors and its returned official excursionists from Simla and Darjeeling! The winter assemblies held fortnightly, the *l  vee*, the drawing-room, and the ball at Government House succeeded by the one at Belvedere, the garden parties and other entertainments, together with the "St. Andrew's dinner, are likely to favorably impress visitors who have not seen the other side of the picture—the intense heat of the tropics during the hot months, when the owners of hackney carriages refuse to hire out their coaches during the day lest their horses should fall down dead, and when the uncertainty of life is painfully brought home to us by the sudden death of relatives, friends and acquaintances. However, all these ugly facts are put aside in the whirl of pleasure which is now in full swing. This year there is an additional and an unusual attraction for the pleasure-seeking people in Calcutta—the arrival of H. M. flagship *Bacchante*, with Rear Admiral Sir Frederick Richards in command. Right hospitably is he, with his officers, entertained by the citizens of Calcutta, and he in return invites a large number of visitors on board his ship, foremost among whom are their Excellencies the Earl and Countess of Dufferin and Staff and His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, Lady and Miss Bayley and Staff. The ship was decked out with innumerable flags displayed in a manner peculiar to British seamen. The pontoon stage leading to the ship supported a handsome arch of foliage at each end. The gangway, too, looked gay with its flowers and shrubbery

and its Chinese lanterns. The highly polished quarter-deck was utilised for dancing for several hours to the strains of the Marine Band. The cream of the decorations was here—flags, flowers and evergreens artistically arranged, produced a pleasing effect. The torpedoes and gatling guns were covered with roses, while pistols, cutlasses, shots and shells were prominent in the decorations. Among the many friends of the Admiral are Col. and Mrs. Ranford. His face lights up when he sees his old friend, and a smile plays round the corners of his mouth when he notices the lady by the side of the Colonel is not the old Mrs. Ranford. Surely Col. Ranford has made a mistake, and has introduced his daughter, or perhaps his sister, to him instead of his wife, or he could not have heard aright; but no, it cannot be, for just then the Viceroy's A. D. C. comes up and says: "Glad to see you looking so well, Mrs. Ranford. Colonel (addressing her husband), you look a boy again."

"A compliment to me, Major," answers Lilian. "I have taken care of him."

The Admiral discovers that he has not made a mistake, or been introduced to the wrong lady, so he glides away and gets his information as to the metamorphosis from other quarters.

The Major passes on and accosts his other friends, and Col. and Mrs. Ranford find themselves talking to Dr. and Mrs. Carte Spangles, Major Pierre and Lieut. Bare-Glaise, and in time they are joined by Capt. and Mrs. Sommerville. The evening is well spent, and the guests are charmed with their host's genial manner and hospitality.

It might have been a little neglect on the Colonel's part which gives him next morning a heavy cold, but he, as most persons would naturally do, takes no notice of it. It is a thing that nearly everybody must get. The fresh breeze on the river, and the long drive home, must have given it to him. Mr. Huntingdon did not go on board; he had not been feeling well for some days, and thought it wise to stay at

home. There was the Theatre on in the evening, and the Colonel wanted to take his wife to see a new play. All their friends were going, he said, but Lilian refused.

"Nonsense, Lilian, we must go; nothing is the matter with me, my pet; you must not lay me up as if I were a child, a tough old veteran like myself," he argued, and Lilian yielded. She too thought it was nothing but an ordinary cold, and that it would be hard to deprive him of an enjoyment for so trifling a thing. The piece on the board was "Ruddigore," the play was beautiful, and Lilian was glad she went instead of moping at home.

Ballygunge looked its nicest at this time of the year; the volunteer camp of exercise was pitched on the maidan, the many white tents arranged in line across the lower part of the field, the band playing now and again of an evening, and the password in vogue conveyed the idea of a military camp. On the other side of the maidan polo matches were played by the Viceroy's Bodyguard; chairs were arranged for visitors and refreshments served in a tent. The scene was one of gaiety and life. Major Newcombe left after the Jubilee celebrations for the Punjab, and Capt. D'Oyley had returned to Central India. From all accounts neither of these two gentlemen seemed inclined to change his bachelorhood for the matrimonial state.

CHAPTER XLI.

LILIAN HAS A GREAT SORROW.

COL. RANFORD was far more ill than he thought. The physician, Dr. Macdonald, pronounced it to be enteric fever. The heat of the summer had helped to weaken his constitution, and the many years he had spent in constant excitement and worry with the first Mrs. Ranford had deranged the whole of his system. If he had taken leave after his second marriage and had gone home his mind, as well as his body, might have been restored to their former tone. He had applied for furlough, intending to take Lilian and go home the following summer. After his second marriage he had rallied and looked quite well, but this was only for a time.

Poor Lilian had the sympathy of all her friends. She was still young, and it was hard for her to battle with so great a sorrow. The only death she had ever witnessed was that of her mother; she was but a child then, and it was so long ago. Just one short year of happiness. A little more than a year ago they had married, and those few months had not been clouded by the smallest care or the slightest quarrel. It seemed too cruel, too unkind, that he should be taken from her.

She sat listlessly in the drawing-room, for she felt too unhappy to be near him always. It was the seventh day now, and the fever had risen to its highest. The medical men held a consultation over him. Three of the best physicians in Calcutta had got together, and they all looked grave.

Lilian sat on the sofa staring at vacancy. What hope had she, what further pleasure in life?

The servant came in, bringing with him a black edged envelope, and gave it to his mistress. Lilian knew by

a glance at the open cover what the contents were. It startled her, and she rushed from the room calling to her father, till she found him and gave him the letter as it was.

Mr. Huntingdon took the note out and saw it was a death card.

"Poor thing," he remarked. "How very sad."

"Mrs. Henry," cried Lilian glancing at the name on the card., "Oh! Pa! did she die of fever? Then Edward will never recover; that foul disease kills everyone."

"Hush, my child," said Mr. Huntingdon, "the mercies of God are great."

"Pa," she answered, turning her eyes full upon him, "you know you are deceiving me, you and the Doctors too; Edward will never live."

Mr. Huntingdon was too grieved to contradict anything she said; he felt the truth of the remark and was unhappy on account of his child. Karminie had been with Lilian nearly all the time of the Colonel's illness; she had come to the Grange uninvited to help Lilian in looking after him.

Daisy and Mr. Lancaster had left for England after the two girls married. Mr. and Mrs. Keller had also returned to Germany.

We nearly all know what a death-bed scene is like, for scarcely anyone of us has not been witness to such at some time in our life; and the agony of parting between a husband and wife, who truly love each other, is best known to those who have had so sad an experience. We ought to throw a veil over sorrow as much as we possibly can, for it is too sacred to be discussed. Our short life here ought to be bright and happy. It is enough that each has to bear his load of sorrow.

The next day the Colonel was insensible and the Doctors gave up hope. He died unconscious, and it saved him the pain of the grief he left behind.

An officer's funeral, although a grand sight, is the saddest one can look upon.

The band played its solemn strains "The Dead March in Saul" as the body, was removed with his cloak

thrown over the coffin, and conveyed to the military burial ground. He who seemed so strong, and was so loved, was laid low.

Lilian locked herself within her own rooms and would see no one; even her father could not gain admittance. The Doctor feared for her, and said she must be taken away even by force.

When the second day passed and no entrance could be obtained, Karminie went up by the backstairs and entered her cousin's room. A 'stony look met hers and an enquiry "Why have you intruded upon me?"

But Karminie had determined to remain in Lilian's room until she brought her to reason.

Mrs. Mowbray also travelled down when she received the telegram to say that there was no hope of the Colonel's recovery, for she was really fond of Lilian, and she knew that at such a time her assistance would be required. She had just arrived and had advised Karminie that it would be best for her to enter Lilian's room.

Karminie, after speaking to Lilian for some time, and receiving no reply, sat quietly on. It was very trying to her to be where she was not wanted, but it was a duty Mrs. Mowbray told her, and she carried it out.

There was a slight knock on the outside of the door. Karminie knew it to be Mrs. Mowbray, and without consulting Lilian or preparing her for her visitor she went to the door and opened it. Lilian turned to her old friend, who stood in the place of a mother to her, and Mrs. Mowbray folded her in her arms as fondly as if she had been her own daughter. She did not succeed in persuading Lilian to leave the Grange, but as soon as her mourning was made up Mrs. Mowbray contrived to make her consent to accompany her to Naini Tal.

Mr. Huntingdon also went, and the Grange and Piggy were left to the care of Mrs. Jennings.

This was February, and it was very cold in the hills; still Mrs. Mowbray thought it better for Lilian to brave the cold than to remain in a house with such sad recollections.

CHAPTER XLII.

PIGGY HAS BEEN VERY NAUGHTY.

MR. HENRY left the Secretariat and was transferred as Collector of Rumblepore after his wife's death, and in order to divert his thoughts he took to the editing of a magazine. He was a fine bold writer and aired his opinions freely, just the sort of writer the public like. Mr. Henry was not like the general run of men in the Civil Service, for he spared many an hour from the whist table and devoted it to writing, which was always brimming over with fresh ideas.

Mr. Huntingdon was the only one of the family who had seen Mr. Henry after he became a widower. Karminie would have much liked to have met him to tell him that she sympathized with him in his grief, but he had not been near Capt. and Mrs. Sommerville since they met at the Grange on his return from Europe. He had gone out of Karminie's life and had taken himself away to the jungly and sickly district of Rumblepore.

Col. Waller was much grieved to learn of the death of his old friend Col. Ranford; he was on inspection tour when the sad news reached him, and he was very sorry also for Lilian that she should have been left so young a widow.

Mr. Huntingdon remained with his daughter at Dr. and Mrs. Mowbray's for over six months before either of them made up their minds to return to Calcutta. It was about the beginning of August that Mrs. Jennings received a letter telling her of their intention to return. She intimated the news to Mrs. Sommerville, and Karminie went over to the Grange and saw that Lilian's rooms were changed from the third to the second floor, and did her best to remove any sad recollections of her husband from her mind. She then went with Capt. Sommerville to Howrah to receive them at the station on the day of their arrival,

and asked Mrs. Jennings to keep Piggy in front to welcome her mistress.

On their reaching the Grange, Karminie told Lilian that she intended spending a few days with her, and that Edward Sommerville would come and dine with them every evening. Karminie had also invited Edith to come for a couple of days to welcome Lilian, so they found Edith awaiting them when they reached home. Lilian showed her appreciation of all that Karminie did for her with an approving smile. She thought it very kind of her to do so much. Karminie occupied the same bedroom with Lilian during her stay at the Grange, and she accompanied her out for her drives, so that she would be left as little as possible to herself.

Lilian had removed her weeds and was attired in a heavy black silk, which Piggy did not at all like. She stared at her mistress as she entered the house, and thus drew Lilian's attention to her dress, who only stroked Piggy's head in answer; still she felt inclined to resent it, until Lilian put her arm around her and said: "What is it, Piggy? Are you not glad to see me?" Piggy wagged her little tail then and recollected that she had a surprise in store for Lilian, which until now had been forgotten. She pulled at Lilian's dress, taking it in her mouth and dragging her towards the garden, till Lilian was obliged to yield and followed her. Piggy released the dress, but grunted and kept a watch that Lilian was behind. When they reached the sty Lilian discovered the cause of the excitement, for there, playing with each other, were about twenty-one black and white miniatures of Piggy. She had married on the sly, and we are sorry to say to an Indian, for some of the little ones were just like the father.

Lilian was much annoyed with Piggy for her ingratitude in not consulting her before taking so serious a step. Poor Piggy was a widow now, for some ruffians had slain the great boar that she had married, and converted him into ham and sausages.

Lilian then went round to the horse boxes, and visited her favorites "Crosspatch" and "Proserpine." Both looked the very same as they did when she last saw them, and the dogs set up a howl for their mistress when they saw her at a distance approaching their kennel. It was sad to think that there was not the least change in all these animals that she had known and liked; they were all there, while her husband whom she had loved most had been taken from her.

CHAPTER XLIII.

MAJOR NEWCOMBE MEETS WITH HIS REWARD.

It was in the afternoon of the 13th of August that the final contest for the "Keswick" Cup took place on the grounds of the Calcutta Club—the men of the — Foresters against those of the C. F. B. C.

Karminie with a deal of persuasion had induced Lilian to go and see the play in which she once took such interest. Edward Sommerville was to be one of the players, and this made Karminie so anxious to go and to take her cousin with her.

The — Foresters, confident of success, met the C. F. B. C. for their last trial. There was a large gathering of spectators, numbering nearly fifteen hundred persons, and among the visitors present was the Lieutenant-Governor with his Staff. The former took great interest in the play. Although the spectators included a number of soldiers, there was no unseemly uproar.

After a hard contest between the two teams the C. F. B. C. triumphed. The evening was wonderfully fine and cool for the sultry month of August. Play fairly began a little before six, when Capt. Sommerville having won the toss banished his opponents to the Red Road goal, and a player on the opposite side kicked off for the C. F. B. C. A good deal of scrimmaging took place. Lieut. Hilson came up with a good run, while Lieut. Betts tried to get through, but Mr. Walter's playing on the other side was too sharp for him; and taking him low put an end to his progress.

The tackling on both sides was excellent, but whether it was the good luck or more skilful play on the part of the C. F. B. C. the men of the — Foresters came off second best, allowing their adversaries to carry off the much-coveted prize.

After the play was over Capt. Sommerville came up to the landaulette containing Mr. Huntingdon, his daughter and his niece, and said he was going to the Fort to change his dress, and would meet them later on at the Grange.

"Have you seen Newcombe," he asked. "I saw him talking to a fellow on the grounds."

Just then Clifford Newcombe came in sight, and Mr. Huntingdon waved his hat to him, which made him come up to the carriage.

Major Newcombe had come to Calcutta on duty; he intended to apply for two years' furlough to Europe.

"I wish we could also go," Mr. Huntingdon said, when Newcombe mentioned his intentions to him.

"I arrived only this morning," he answered when Karminie enquired why he had not been to see them yet.

"But you are not staying at the Grange, are you?" he asked of Karminie.

"No, I have just gone back to the Fort, but Edward and I are dining there this evening, and you are to do the same, so just get into the carriage; there's plenty of room for you, and now let us take a turn on the Strand and then go home," she replied, ordering the coachman to drive on as the Major got in.

Capt. Sommerville was going with his company to Suakim, and Karminie was going to stay at the Grange until his return from the expedition.

Clifford Newcombe had written to Lilian expressing his sorrow at the Colonel's death, but Lilian was too unhappy at the time and did not answer his note.

It was nearly dusk when they reached home, and Major Newcombe remained on for dinner in the same suit of clothes he wore to the play ground, while Karminie went into the room to change her dress for a lighter one.

Lilian never now troubled to dress for dinner, so she appeared in her heavy black silk, and being left to herself went into the green-room and gave herself up to thinking. The events of the day had taken her thoughts back to last year when she used to go to watch those very games with

one who was no more ; the agitation was too much for her and she burst into tears. In her grief she did not notice Clifford Newcombe's entrance and his subsequent attitude of kneeling by her side.

"Lilian," he said softly, "you must not grieve so. I know how very hard it is for you, but you must try not to give way to your sorrow."

He tried to soothe her as he had often done when she was but a little child, and she had come to him sobbing with a broken doll or other toy. Putting aside his own feelings, he did his utmost to comfort her now as he had done then.

"Oh ! Cliff," she said, "why did you not save me from this pain ; why did you not tell me on the day I first met Edward that he was a married man and thus have prevented my caring for him ?"

"It's over now, my pet," he answered, "do not blame me. I would give my life to shield you from harm, my child. I did intend telling you of it that evening in the garden when Daisy came to us. As you used to come to me when a child, so now, Lilian, let me soothe you."

It was very painful to Major Newcombe to say these words to the woman he had loved from her childhood, and from whom he in vain hoped for a return of affection. By a powerful effort of will he controlled his feelings and appeared to her only as a brother. She had chosen twice—first Edward Sommerville and then Edward Ranford, but never once had she thought of him as anything but dear old Cliff, as she called him. Lilian looked up and saw the pained expression upon his face.

"Poor Cliff," she said laying her face against his, "why are you so sad. Should you marry, Cliff, I am afraid you will never think of the naughty girl who has caused you so much trouble in her short life."

"Marry," he replied with a reproachful look. "You ought not to hurt me more than you can help, Lilian. I will never marry."

"Cliff," she whispered, "I could never love again as I

loved Edward, although you are so good. Would you care to marry me, Cliff, if I gave you only that love which your little girl has always had for you ? ”

“ Yes, Lilian,” he answered, “ I would take you even so, for if you could not love me any more than you do now, still I shall be near my little girl and be able to soothe and comfort her in her trouble ; that will be sufficient happiness for me.”

Lilian twined her arms round him and kissed him as she ever did, and when Karminie and her husband had gone home that night, and Clifford Newcombe had also made his exit, Lilian told her father what her decision had been, and Mr. Huntingdon stared at his daughter in surprise.

At first he thought that she had lost her reason.

Lilian smiled and said : “ Pa, you must think me very strange to commence caring for someone else so soon, but I have told Cliff everything, and he does not expect me to love him more than I have done since I was a little child.”

“ Well,” thought Mr. Huntingdon, “ if it were any other than Clifford Newcombe I should be astonished, but he is a good fellow, and I suppose he thinks it for the best that Lilian should marry again ; it will be a diversion for her, poor child, for she seems very unhappy, and time, the great healer, may help to cure the wound.”

CHAPTER XLIV.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

It was about the middle of October that Capt. Sommerville returned wounded from the Suakim Expedition.

Major Newcombe had also obtained his two years' leave, and as it was only on Karminie's account that Mr. Huntingdon and Lilian remained in India, they now made up their minds that all of them should leave by the same steamer *vid* Bombay.

Lilian had decided to marry Clifford Newcombe after her time of mourning for Colonel Ranford was over.

Mr. Huntingdon sent a telegram to his mother apprising her of their intention to visit Westmoreland. He knew that the old lady would be delighted at the prospect of having her son and grand-daughters with her again. Mrs. Huntingdon was over eighty years now, but she still enjoyed good health. She was one of those who never said an unkind word to anyone, and her son was a counterpart of herself.

She was very sorry to hear of Lilian's widowhood, although she had not approved of her marriage with the Colonel, whom she thought unsuitable in age. But Karminie's marriage with Edward Sommerville she fully approved of. She preferred a military officer to the dry Jack of the Civil Service, and was not sorry that the engagement with Mr. Henry had been broken off. She often thought of her young days and of the gallant soldier who stood by her side, and who had won his rank on the battlefield, before getting on the staff. She used to look at the life-size oil painting of him in his full regimentals, with the Colonel's sword hanging under it in her room, and she often wiped a tear from her eye as she took off with her handkerchief the dust from the handle and scabbard of his sword.

Mr. Huntingdon instructed his agents to let the Grange and the other houses in India belonging to Lilian. Mrs. Jennings with her little savings retired from service. The whole stud of horses was to be sold with the exception of "Crosspatch" and "Proserpine," both of which were to be taken to England in Norman's charge. Piggy's little ones were all given away, while she herself was to be taken back to her native land. Lilian also took Diana, her favorite hound, but the remainder of the dogs were sold off. Dr. and Mrs. Carte Spangles were still in Rowdypore. Major Pierre and Lieut. Bare-Glaise often spent an evening with them, and they were the best of friends.

On arriving at Bombay, and getting on board the P. and O. steamer, Lilian met an old friend, no other than Capt. D'Oyley. He had taken furlough and was also going home.

They looked a very cheery and comfortable party of friends seated on the deck of the steamer; even Lilian's sad face lit up as she watched the lascars raise the anchor. Then away sped the vessel on its voyage home.

THE END.
